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MENTOR

JOHN ADAMS ACADEMY FACULTY ACADEMIC JOURNAL



Emphasis on Mentors & Classics

John Adams 
ACADEMY

MENTOR is the faculty journal of John Adams Academy. The purpose of this journal is to uncover the alliance between the enduring pathways of Classical curricula and the timeless guideposts of our Ten Core Values. As educators and members of an intellectual community that inherits and relates a legacy of truth, wisdom, and beauty, we perceive the abundance in each contribution to the Great Conversation.

We take our name from the complementary sources of the Latin word *mens, mentis* (mind, thought, intention) and the Homeric character Mentor (Μέντωρ), to whom great Odysseus entrusted care of his home and family, and in the guise of whom the goddess Athena gave counsel to the young Telemachus. The former origin recalls our human tradition of sentience, the latter our divine duties of love and loyalty. Taken together, the essence of mentoring is sharing with others the beauty and truth that has fallen to us.

Each issue, *Mentor* invites all John Adams Academy faculty to examine how particular Core Values, on a rotating basis, are expressed within the very texts, histories, artifacts, mathematics, sciences etc. that we uncover with our scholars. Whether the themes be humble, aimed for the heart of the youngest child, or rich and complex and intended for the minds of the mature and wise, the legacy of the classics and the presence of Ten Core Values offer invaluable insight into life.



The John Adams Academies, founded in 2010, are Northern California's only tuition-free, TK-12 classical leadership education charter schools. Its main campus located in Roseville serves more than 1300 scholars, and campuses that opened this year in Lincoln and El Dorado Hills serve an additional 420.

John Adams Academy is restoring America's heritage by developing servant-leaders who are keepers and defenders of the principles of freedom for which our Founding Fathers pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor. By combining classical education with servant leadership training and core values, John Adams Academy develops scholars who are leaders in their homes, communities, and country. Through classics, mentoring, and modeling, scholars are inspired to prepare for their unique mission and will naturally hunger for oncoming responsibilities and future contributions in society.

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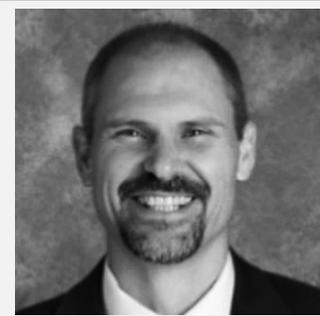
Message from the Dean

By Troy Henke, Ed.D.

I still remember the day my father came into my room and placed in front of me a book written by Og Mandino called *The Greatest Salesman in the World*. He told me I ought to read it, so I did. Afterward, we had a life-changing discussion. This book was followed by Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* and Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. My father wasn't classically trained, yet, unbeknownst to either of us we were engaging in a time-honored classical tradition: that of mentoring and being mentored through the use of great (or, in this case, good) books.

As I read history I am stunned by the fact that every great man and woman had a mentor, and most were mentored through the classics. Examples include Alexander the Great, mentored by Aristotle, who slept with a copy of *The Iliad* under his pillow. Thanks to the passionate Isaac Barrow, Isaac Newton gained a love for Euclid's *Elements* and he spent much of his life striving to imitate and extend that great work with his own works including *Mathematica Principia*. Florence Nightingale and Hypatia were mentored by their fathers, each learned several languages, studied a wide range of classics and became world renowned for their compassion and wisdom. Lincoln, mentored by his mother, gained a love for the Bible and Shakespeare.

As one of our Ten Core Values, John Adams Academy continues this tradition by emphasizing mentors and classics. Our teachers do more than teach. They mentor our scholars by seeking to gain their hearts and minds and lead them towards virtue and love of country through classics works. I am honored to be a part of this work and associate with this faculty and staff. They are inspiring, they are mentors.



Troy Henke worked as a teacher, administrator, and consultant for many private and charter schools before coming to John Adams Academy this year to serve as the Dean of Secondary Education.

Core Value #3: Emphasis on Mentors and Classics¹

By Dean Forman Ph.D.

Mentors are excellent teachers. A mentor is an individual of high moral character, more advanced than the scholar, who can guide the scholar's learning, and by which with undiminished integrity represents exemplary excellence. Such Mentors historically affected almost without exception the greatest leaders in their formational years. The formula for them was simple yet profound; they read the classics, they discussed them with mentors whose passion for learning was contagious, and they practiced them in real societal conditions. These mentors, more experienced in life, were able to see the great potential within these future leaders and encouraged them to stretch their capacity by demanding quality work. The mentors helped them apply the lessons and principles learned in the classics to real life, thus building the solid foundation that enabled these individuals to become the amazing leaders we read about today.



Dean and Linda Forman founded John Adams Academy in 2010 and continue to take an active role as valuable mentors to the staff and scholars at the academy. Dean also currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Teachers at John Adams Academy place the development of their scholars foremost in their work. They are well versed in the subjects they teach and use effective methods of instruction. They know how to balance direct instruction with Socratic discussion; Aristotelian group interaction with individual study; and content knowledge with skill acquisition. They live the core values of John Adams Academy.

Classics allow us intimate insight into the greatest men and women who have ever lived. A classic is a book that has a great theme that teaches principles of enduring importance. It is written in

¹ This expansion on the 3rd Core Value, written by Dean Forman, was first published online at "Core Value #3 – Emphasis on Mentors and Classics," *John Adams Academy*, http://www.johnadamsacademy.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=297548&type=d&pREC_ID=970277.

noble language that inspires not only the psyche of the soul but also expands the multiple senses of the mind. It summarizes the virtues and values of a civilization at its apex and has universality by speaking to audiences across time. It has universality and speaks across the millennia to people of any age. A classic book is a possession for all time. It is never finished saying what it has to say and can be read again and again. In a classic, we discover heroes courageously grappling with societal, historical, political, and moral problems that are timeless for their expression of understanding and universal in their application of relevance. Classics, besides being foundational, are required in a traditional liberal arts education. Indeed, a classic based education produces scholars, who possess the expanding availability of intellect and the practiced skills of a free person empowered with tremendous responsibility of self-government.

Aesop's Fables as Classic and Mentor

By Linda Forman

"Persuasion is often more effectual than force" - Aesop

The greatest thinkers, entrepreneurs and statesmen throughout history have used a simple curriculum. They have read the classics, discussed them with mentors and have applied the lessons learned to real life. I have always been intrigued that even the most unpretentious literature that meets the characterization of a classic can have a profound and lasting effect on world leaders and hence the course of civilization.

When such leaders hear the expressions "sour grapes," "wolf in sheep's clothing," "killing the golden goose," or "crying wolf," they immediately understand their context and implication and so do we. These phrases are part of our language and culture and have their origin in fables. For centuries the collection of *Aesop's Fables* has proven to be both classic and mentor.



Linda and Dean Forman founded John Adams Academy in 2010 and continue to take an active role as valuable mentors to the staff and scholars at the academy. Linda also serves on the Academic Services Committee.

Aesop's Fables as Classic

John Adams Academy has defined a classic as a work that can be experienced many times over and give something new each time. A classic or great book has three essential qualities: a Great Theme - concerned with issues of enduring importance, Noble language - that uplifts, and Universality - it speaks to all nations through all ages, communicating enduring values and ideas.

Although scholars cannot agree on the existence of the historical figure of Aesop it is unlikely that

mentions of him by Herodotus¹, Aristophanes², and Plato³ are completely unfounded so we can cautiously assume he was a slave in the 6th century B.C., that he came from Phrygia and lived in Samos, was alleged to be ugly and disfigured and that he was known for his telling of tales, or fables.⁴

The fables are often introduced to us in childhood and consequently we believe them to be children's literature. At John Adams Academy our youngest scholars study the fables. This educational practice began with the Renaissance humanists who "recovered the great texts of classical antiquity and made them the staples of early modern philology and rhetoric."⁵ As these young boys matured from learning the fable as form they, began reading and rewriting fables for wisdom, for practical application and to help them see what virtue looks like.

Teaching by fable is the most ancient method of moral instruction; and allusions to it abound in the early history of all nations. The dullest minds could be reached by an apologue or a parable, and the brightest ones were not offended by this indirect mode of giving advice. Indeed, the fable seems to have been at one period the universal method of appeal to the reason or the conscience. Kings on their thrones were addressed in fables by their courtiers and subjects were admonished by monarchs by means of skillfully-told apologues.⁶

Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) French philosopher writes of Aesop:

Aesop's lectures against the faults of men were the fullest of good sense and wit

¹ In *The Histories*, Herodotus says, "...a fellow slave of Aesop, the story-writer. He too belonged to Iadmon, as is clearly proved by the following: that when the Delphians constantly proclaimed (as an oracle bade them) that whoever wished to should claim the atonement money for the murder of Aesop, no one appeared to claim it save Iadmon...So it is proved that Aesop belonged to Iadmon." [Herodotus, *The History*, trans. David Grene, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 189.]

² There are several of Aesop's Fables embedded in the verses of Aristophanes. In "The Birds" he writes, "Nay, but in Aesop's fables there's something, mind you, told about the fox how ill it fared, consorting with an eagle." [Aristophanes, *The Birds*, trans. Benjamin Bickley Rogers, ed. Robert M. Hutchins, Vol. 5 of *Great Books of the Western World*, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 551.]

³ Plato's account of Socrates poeticizing the fables before his execution is recounted later in this paper.

⁴ Aesop most likely did not write down any of his fables but about two hundred and fifty years after Aesop's time, Demetrius of Phaleron who studied with Aristotle, became both ruler of Athens, librarian of the Alexandrian Library and a proponent of Aristotelean rhetoric collected a large number of fables and called them by Aesop's name. [Aesop's Fables. "Online Collection" <http://www.aesopfables.com/more.html> (Accessed October 10, 2017).]

⁵ Jasmine Hassan, *Aesop: His Journey of Life, and Beyond* (Jasmine Hassan Books, 2011), 1.

⁶ Oscar Fay Adams, *Dear Old Story-Teller*, (Boston: D. Lothrop Company, 1889), 225.

that can be imagined. Can any inventions be more happy than the images Aesop made use of to instruct mankind? They are exceedingly fit for children, and no less proper for grown persons; they are all that is necessary to perfect a precept, I mean the mixture of the useful with the agreeable.⁷

He then quotes Aulus Gellius (130-180 A.D.) Latin author and grammarian as saying:

Aesop the Phrygian fabulist was not without reason esteemed to be wise, since he did not, after the manner of the philosophers, severely and imperiously command such things as were fit to be advised and persuaded, but by feigning, diverting and entertaining apologues he insinuates good and wholesome advice into the minds of men with a kind of willing attention.⁸

Aristotle argues in *Rhetoric* that lacking actual evidence fables can be a valuable tool of persuasion in speeches to make a specific point and to support one's argument.⁹

The fables have amused, taught, warned and provided wisdom lessons for daily conduct, and in Aesop's and each succeeding age of tyrants, have provided a medium for the politically powerless as applied moral philosophy. In a time of authoritarian rule in Greek history they allowed for veiled criticism against the government and a reminder to the oppressed that they could succeed against the powerful. "A tyrant cannot take notice of a fable without putting on the cap that fits."¹⁰

Aesop's fables may be short, but throughout the centuries his fables have continued to be a powerful tool of communicating a shared history, of reinforcing a culture's values, of calling attention to traditions, and opining political allegory and discourse. In our do-whatever-feels-good culture the ethical lessons of the fables allow a neutral path to self-reflection and understanding of questions of conscience and character. The fables give us the personal wisdom to be better as individuals and as citizens.

⁷ Sir J. A. Hammerton, *Outline of Great Books*, (New York: Wm. H. Wise & Co., 1936), 1133.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, ed. Robert M. Hutchins, Vol. 9 *Great Books of the Western World*, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 641.

¹⁰ Annabel M. Patterson, *Fables of Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 17.

Aesop's Fables as Mentor

John Adams Academy has defined a mentor as an individual of high moral character who uses classics to teach, who personalizes the learning opportunities, and who keeps it simple by structuring the learning around reading the classics, writing about them, and discussing what has been learned. These criteria can also be met through imagined and fictitious individuals, or in the case of fables, through animal characters imbued with human characteristics.

After centuries of rewriting and recompiling, *Aesop's Fables* was an established classic for adults, and by the sixteenth century the collected fables was considered a school book for children in Elizabethan schools. The fables would have been among the first readings for Shakespeare.¹¹ Allusions, both subtle and obvious in many of Shakespeare's plays are evidence of his familiarity with the fables of Aesop and their ability to instruct and guide.

In *2 Henry IV*, III Lord of York is telling the king that Gloucester's allegiance is no longer certain and refers to "The Farmer and the Viper:"¹²

Well, nobles, well; 'tis politicly done,
To send me packing with an host of men:
I fear me you but warm the starved snake,
Who, cherish'd in your breasts, will sting your hearts.¹³

In *All's Well That Ends Well* the King of France speaks with Lord Lefew lamenting there is no cure for his infirmity. Lafew alludes to Aesop's "The Fox and the Grapes:"¹⁴ "O, will you eat no grapes, my royal fox? Yes, but you will, my noble grapes, and if my royal fox could reach them."¹⁵ *2 Henry VI*, III.i.69, and *Timon of Athens*, II. i. 28, references "The Crow in Borrowed Feathers."¹⁶ *2 Henry VI*, III. i 77, "The Wolf in the Sheep's Skin."¹⁷ And in *As You Like It*, I. i. 87 "The Dog that Lost his Teeth."¹⁸

¹¹ William Allan Neilson and Ashley Horace Thorndike, *The Facts About Shakespeare* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), 52.

¹² Aesop and D. L. Ashliman, *Aesop's Fables* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2005), 147.

¹³ William Shakespeare and Gwynne Blakemore Evans, *The Riverside Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 685.

¹⁴ Aesop and Ashliman, *Aesop's Fables*, 15.

¹⁵ Shakespeare and Evans, *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 547.

¹⁶ Aesop and Ashliman, *Aesop's Fables*, 88.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 169.

Shakespeare also dramatizes a lengthy sequence in *Coriolanus* I. i. 96-163 referencing “The Belly and the Members:”

Aesop: The members of the body once rebelled against the belly. “You,” they said to the belly, “live in luxury and sloth, and never do a stroke of work; while we not only have to do all the hard work there is to be done, but are actually your slaves and have to minister to all your wants. Now, we will do so no longer, and you can shift for yourself for the future.” They were as good as their word, and left the belly to starve. The result was just what might have been expected. The whole body soon began to fail, and the members and all shared in the general collapse. And then they saw too late how foolish they had been.¹⁹

Shakespeare most likely borrowed the theme from the Roman historian Livy who applied the fable to civil unrest. It is recounted in the context of a revolt in the 6th century B.C., in which a Roman senator is said to have told the story and calmed the uprising.²⁰ The fable is again repeated in Plutarch’s *Life of Coriolanus*.²¹

In the first century A.D. Paul of Tarsus who was educated both in the Hebrew and Hellenic tradition used this fable not in political application but in the spiritual sense, as the body of the church. In 1 Corinthians chapter 12 Paul uses the metaphor of all using their equally important talents for the collective good.²²

“The Belly and the Members” figuratively expressed some of the most intolerant political philosophies and practices. The fable continued to appear well into the mid-nineteenth century with a capitalistic variation, the need for a strong central government versus the rights of workers to participate in



Wenceslas Hollar's illustration from John Ogilby's version of the fables (1668)

¹⁹ Ibid., 149.

²⁰ “Online Library of Liberty,” *The History of Rome, vol. 1*, accessed September 13, 2017, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/livy-the-history-of-rome-vol-1-2.32.9>

²¹ Plutarch, *Coriolanus*, trans. Dryden, *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 14, ed. Robert M. Hutchins (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 177.

²² 1 Corinthians 12, *Holy Bible*, KJV.

the system.²³

Two of America's greatest statesmen, Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln, were both mentored, figuratively, at the knee of Aesop. Both leaders used the lessons of the fables to promote peace and strength in the first and in the second founding of this nation.

Benjamin Franklin's Grammar School education included *Aesop's Fables*. The fables had a great influence upon him and he valued and referred to fables often and wrote several of his own.²⁴ In 1747 Franklin issued a reprint of the most popular speller of the eighteenth century and included the first Americanized illustrations of Aesop's fables. Franklin either cut them himself or had an engraver do them under his direction. One woodcut shows the Conestoga wagon unique to America.²⁵

The woodcut echoed the notion of Franklin's 6 March 1733 essay concerning the French threat to America. He asked, "Whether the ancient Story of the Man, who sat down and prayed his Gods to lift his Cart out of the Mire ("Hercules and the Wagoner"²⁶), hath not a very good Moral? God helps them that help themselves."²⁷

Franklin also used a fable to support his favoring of a unicameral legislature instead of balancing of two houses:

Has not the famous political fable of the snake, with two heads and one body, some useful instruction contained in it? She was going to a brook to drink, and in her way was to pass thro' a hedge, a twig of which opposed her direct course; one head chose to go on the right side of the twig, the other on the left; so that time was spent in the contest, and, before the decision was completed, the poor snake died with thirst.²⁸

During the period of America's second founding, Abraham Lincoln used fables to guide his

²³ Hassan, *Aesop*, 4.

²⁴ Joseph A. Leo Lemay, *The Life of Benjamin Franklin*, Vol 1: Journalist, 1706-1730 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 48.

²⁵ Joseph A. Leo Lemay, *The Life of Benjamin Franklin*, Vol 2: Printer and Publisher 1730-1747 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 395.

²⁶ Aesop and Ashliman, *Aesop's Fables*, 102.

²⁷ Joseph A. Leo Lemay, *The Life of Benjamin Franklin*, Vol. 3 Soldier, Scientist and Politician (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 6.

²⁸ James Campbell, *Recovering Benjamin Franklin: An Exploration of a Life of Science and Service* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), 216.

diplomacy and communicate his goals to his cabinet and countrymen. It was said Lincoln read *Aesop's Fables* so many times that he could write it out from memory. "The morals of some of the stories became deeply ingrained in his mind, like the lesson drawn from the fable of the lion and the four bulls: union is strength."²⁹ Internalized, these lessons became Lincoln's character, giving him the wisdom and vision to transform a nation.

He wrote in a campaign circular to the people of Illinois, March 4, 1843:

That 'union is strength' is a truth that has been known, illustrated and declared, in various ways and forms in all ages of the world. That great fabulist and philosopher, Aesop, illustrated it by his fable of the bundle of sticks; and he whose wisdom surpasses that of all philosophers, has declared that "a house divided against itself cannot stand."³⁰

Lincoln's inspiration:

"A Bundle of Sticks:" A certain father had a family of sons, who were forever quarreling among themselves. No words he could say did the least good, so he cast about in his mind for some very striking example that should make them see that discord would lead them to misfortune. One day when the quarreling had been much more violent than usual and each of the sons was moping in a surly manner, he asked one of them to bring him a bundle of sticks. Then handing the bundle to each of his sons in turn he told them to try to break it. But although each one tried his best, none was able to do so. The father then untied the bundle and gave the sticks to his sons to break one by one. This they did very easily. "My sons," said the father, "do you not see how certain it is that if you agree with each other and help each other, it will be impossible for your enemies to injure you? But if you are divided among yourselves, you will be no stronger than a single stick

²⁹ David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 30-31.

³⁰ Abraham Lincoln, *The Collected works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler Vol 5 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1974), 315-316.

in that bundle.³¹

Abraham Lincoln used the wisdom of a fable to unite a nation but many other famous and influential individuals throughout history have also used them for their own singular purposes: to inspire creativity, to encourage character development, to support personal views, to educate, to garner backing of a position or simply to just pass the time.

Leonardo da Vinci's (1452-1519) library contained three copies of *Aesop's Fables*³² and in *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* Leonardo includes a collection of original fables which are a reflection of his views of contemporary politics and personal liberty and obviously influenced by Aesop:

The thrushes rejoiced greatly on seeing a man catch the owl and take away her liberty by binding her feet with strong bonds. But then by means of bird-lime the owl was the cause of the thrushes losing not only their liberty but even their life.

Leonardo provides his own moral:

This is said of those states which rejoice at seeing their rulers lose their liberty, in consequence of which they afterwards lose hope of succor and remain bound in the power of their enemy, losing their liberty and often life.³³

Martin Luther (1483-1546), priest and religious reformer had a high regard for the stories of the pagan author Aesop, and considered them second only to the Bible. He thought them wiser than “the harmful opinions of all the philosophers.”³⁴ Luther repeated the fables in his sermons, lectures, commentaries and letters and supported their use in Lutheran homes and schools. He applied them to the contemporary issues of the day with moral, theological, literary, sociopolitical and economic interpretations. He felt they not only supported character development but aided in the understanding of the Holy Scripture.

³¹ Library of Congress Aesop's Fables, “The Bundle of Sticks,” <http://read.gov/aesop/040.html> (Accessed October 11, 2017).

³² Patterson, *Fables of Power*, 11.

³³ Edward MacCurdy, ed., *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, (Old Saybrook, CT: Konecky & Konecky, 2005), 1068.

³⁴ Carl P. E. Springer, *Luther's Aesop* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2011), xi.

Francis Bacon (1561-1626) used the fables of Aesop to support his views in many of his essays. In “Of Nature” he writes:

But let not a man trust his victory over his nature, too far; for nature will lay buried a great time, and yet revive, upon the occasion or temptation. Like as it was with Aesop’s damsel (“The Mistress and Her Servants”³⁵), turned from a cat to a woman, who sat very demurely at the board’s end, till a mouse ran before her.³⁶

John Locke (1632-1704), in *Some Thoughts on Education* argued fables should be a key component of a child’s education. He says when a child begins to read:

To this purpose, I think *Aesop’s Fables* the best, which being stories apt to delight and entertain a child, may yet afford useful reflections to a grown man; and if his memory retain them all his life after, he will not repent to find them there, amongst his manly thoughts and serious business.³⁷

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), influenced by Aesop wrote original and traditional material into fairy tales and fables in the 1870s for graded primers to help Russian peasant children learn to read.³⁸

In contemporary politics California’s state governor, Jerry Brown, used “The Ant and the Grasshopper” to support his Spring 2016 spending proposal. The Sacramento Bee reported:

In the fable, which Brown reprinted and attached to his most recent spending proposal, a grasshopper fails one summer to prepare for upcoming, colder months, while a dutiful ant stores food. In the winter, the grasshopper starves while the ant thrives.

³⁵ Aesop and Ashliman, *Aesop’s Fables*, 138.

³⁶ Francis Bacon, “The Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral, of Francis Ld. Verulam Viscount St. Albans – Of Nature,” <http://www.authorama.com/essays-of-francis-bacon-39.html> (Accessed September 14, 2017).

³⁷ John Locke, *English Philosophers of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Harvard Classics, vol. 37, ed Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier & Son Corporation, 1910), 131-132.

³⁸ George Thomas Kurian and James D. Smith, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Christian Literature: Genres and Types*, vol. 2 (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 25.

For Brown....the fable is a useful tale. "I'm trying, in whatever way I can, to indicate that getting ready for a downturn is something that people for thousands of years have thought about, and for thousands of years people have made mistakes and not gotten ready. Aesop has some credibility."³⁹

As a final example, in Plato's *Phaedo* Socrates' friends visit him in prison on the day of his execution. One of them asked Socrates why he has spent his time adapting some of Aesop's fables into poetry when he had never done such a thing before. Socrates says:

I did it in the attempt to discover the meaning of certain dreams, and to clear my conscience, in case this was the art which I had been told to practice...In the course of my life I have often had the same dream, appearing in different forms at different times, but always saying the same thing: "Socrates, practice and cultivate the arts." In the past I used to think....that was urging me on to do what I was doing already...because philosophy is the greatest of the arts...But ever since my trial...I have felt that perhaps it might be this popular form of art that the dream intended me to practice...I had cleared my conscience by writing poetry and so obeying the dream....I was not good at inventing stories. So I availed myself of some of Aesop's fables which were ready to hand and familiar to me, and I versified the first of them that suggested themselves.⁴⁰

This not only appears to be an authoritative statement that Aesop's fables existed in prose form at the end of the fifth century B.C. but also would put Aesop and his fables in a mentor relationship to Socrates as in his last days he used Aesop's fables to clear his conscience and to obey the command of the gods to cultivate an art higher than philosophy.

Beyond the legacy of charming Aesopic expressions as simple as they are sophisticated, the collection known as *Aesop's Fables* can be judged as mentor and classic by its enduring and universal value and its profound impact on Western thought and culture, its influence in formal literature, moral teachings

³⁹ David Siders, "Jerry Brown, Aesop's Fable and Going 'Toe to Toe on Aphorisms,'" *Sacramento Bee*, May 13, 2016, <http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article77492642.html> (accessed September 13, 2017).

⁴⁰ Huntington Cairns and Edith Hamilton, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato Including the Letters*, (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1961), 43.

and the shaping of great men and women throughout history. In a sense the fables are a compilation of the wisdom of the human race and can contribute to the correction of the characteristic mistakes of our own age.

As classic and mentor at John Adams Academy *Aesop's Fables* can aid our scholars in internalizing the principles of virtue and greatness, support them in their own unique missions and show them with beauty and clarity how best to make life's choices for their ultimate freedom.

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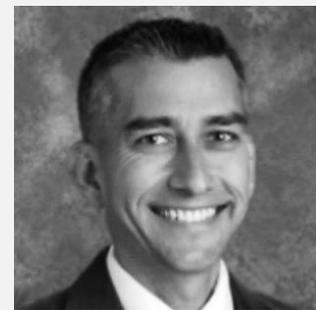
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A Government of Laws and Not of Men: Finding Mentors and Classics in Unexpected Places

By Norman Gonzales

In the modern era an average person may not realize or identify whether they have had a mentor in their life. Some may not even have a full understanding of what a mentor is. Absent the knowledge of a thing, a person cannot appreciate the importance or desirability of that thing. Not enough facets of society focus on this terminology or even the importance of mentors. Upon consideration of the question about mentorship and the realization of what a mentor is, “an individual of high moral character, more advanced than the scholar, who can guide the scholar's learning, and by which with undiminished integrity represents exemplary excellence,”¹ it can more easily be discerned whether a mentor has indeed been a factor in a person’s life. Sadly, not everyone can say that they have had a mentor that personally impacted them in this way. Even if circumstances of life prevent a person from having a direct relationship with a mentor living today, that doesn’t mean that they cannot have a mentor at all. Mentors can be found in unexpected places.



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Likewise a person going about their day may not have a full appreciation of what defines a classic. A classic is a work with a noble theme using noble language that imparts upon the reader noble and time tested principles. Classics are written by, and about, individuals who can reach across communities, states, nations and time to serve as mentors. “Classics allow us intimate insight into the greatest men and women who have ever lived.”² As such, the classics make available to everyone the opportunity to have a mentor.

Just as mentors can be found in unexpected places so too a classic isn’t always the work one expects. An area in which both unexpected mentors and classics can be found is in the area of Law. There are many great mentors who can be consulted on the topic of law, natural rights, systems of government,

¹ “Core Value #3 – Emphasis on Mentors and Classics,” *John Adams Academy*, http://www.johnadamsacademy.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=297548&type=d&pREC_ID=970277.

² Ibid.

role of the citizen, etc. Great mentors can be found in Aquinas, Augustine, Plato, Cicero, Locke, Hobbes and countless others. The importance and weight of the source of individual rights and the proper means of securing these rights has yielded classics such as the *Law* by the great mentor Frederic Bastiat. Here Bastiat says:

Existence, faculties, assimilation – in other words, personality, liberty, property – this is man.

It is of these three things that it may be said, apart from all demagogic subtlety, that they are anterior and superior to all human legislation.

It is not because men have made laws, that personality, liberty, and property exist. On the contrary, it is because personality, liberty, and property exists before-hand, that men make laws. What, then, is law? As I have said elsewhere, it is the collective organization on the individual right to lawful defense.

Nature, or rather God, has bestowed upon every one of us the right to defend his person, his liberty, and his property, since these are the three constituent or preserving elements of life; elements, each of which is rendered complete by the others, and that cannot be understood without them. For what are our faculties, but the extension of our personality? And what is property, but an extension of our faculties?³

Law, then derives from the rights of the individual given to each by Nature and Nature's God. This notion is not unique to America, however, the uniqueness lies in the American founder's application of this sentiment in the creation of a new form of government. The people of the United States have "a government of laws and not of men." This phrase is likely to have been, not only heard, but often repeated throughout the life of each American citizen. As one reflects on this phrase it calls into question its source, and more importantly, it's truth. The phrase is first seen in American usage in the Massachusetts Constitution. John Adams was a member of the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention of 1779 and is credited as being the primary author of the document. In it he penned the following words:

³ Frederic Bastiat, *The Law*, trans. Mises Institute (1850; reprint Tribeca Books, 2007).

"In the government of this Commonwealth, the legislative department shall never exercise the executive and judicial powers, or either of them: The executive shall never exercise the legislative and judicial powers, or either of them: The judicial shall never exercise the legislative and executive powers, or either of them: to the end it may be a government of laws and not of men."⁴

To establish a government of laws, and not of men, requires a firm understanding of the source of law coupled with a written Constitution designed to serve as the legal framework from which all other laws are to be measured. The United States Constitution, built upon this concept of establishing a government of laws and not of men, influenced by Adams and borrowed from the Massachusetts Constitution, clearly delineates the powers entrusted to the government by the people. The fact that the people are sovereign and the government derives their just power from the governed is an essential ingredient to the success of the American experiment. Another essential consideration in developing the Constitution is the need to anticipate human nature. For without addressing human nature, a government of men over men will not long cease to be a government of laws and not of men.

This sentiment, "a government of laws and not of men," is represented in the structure and form of the American Government, in its separation of powers, and checks and balances. Designing these checks and balances in the United States Constitution, simply putting quill to parchment, is not enough. The delicate balance struck between providing the government enough power to function while preserving and protecting the rights of the individual relies on leaders who exhibit Public and Private Virtue, who not only understand the source of law, but strive to safeguard that reality. Throughout history those in power or leadership have not always exhibited this public virtue. In another prescient statement John Adams warns, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other"⁵

James Madison, in Federalist 51 frames the dilemma of fashioning a government of laws and not of men in an elegant manner.

"If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern

⁴ John Adams, "Massachusetts Constitution," Part the First, Article XXX (1780), *National Humanities Institute*, <http://www.nhinet.org/ccs/docs/ma-1780.htm>.

⁵ John Adams, "Letter from John Adams to Massachusetts Militia, 11 October 1798," *Founders Online*, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/99-02-02-3102>.

men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself. A dependence on the people is, no doubt, the primary control on the government; but experience has taught mankind the necessity of auxiliary precautions.”⁶

While success of the American experiment ultimately rests on the people and its leaders exhibiting Public and Private Virtue, auxiliary precautions are necessary due to the truth of human nature and the tendency toward accumulation of power in the hands of the few. One auxiliary precaution put into place by the Founders is that of the Supreme Court. Article 3 of the United States Constitution establishes the federal judiciary. In Federalist 78 Alexander Hamilton, in discussing the terms of office and manner in which the justices are to be selected, attempts to highlight the importance of a judiciary while simultaneously conveying that the judiciary should not be feared as there is minimal power held by the courts:

“Whoever attentively considers the different departments of power must perceive that, in a government in which they are separated from each other, the judiciary, from the nature of its functions, will always be the least dangerous to the political rights of the Constitution; because it will be least in a capacity to annoy or injure them. The executive not only dispenses the honors but holds the sword of the community. The legislature not only commands the purse but prescribes the rules by which the duties and rights of every citizen are to be regulated. The judiciary, on the contrary, has no influence over either the sword or the purse; no direction either of the strength or of the wealth of the society, and can take no active resolution whatever. It may truly be said to have neither FORCE nor WILL but merely judgment; and must ultimately depend upon the aid of the executive arm even for the efficacy of its judgments.”⁷

While the intent of the founders may have been to create a judiciary possessing only judgement,

⁶ James Madison, “Federalist 51,” *The Federalist Papers: Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Jay*, ed. Clinton Rossiter (Penguin Books, 1961), 322.

⁷ Alexander Hamilton, “Federalist 78,” *The Federalist Papers*, 465.

danger still exists of that intent being corrupted. Hamilton goes on to admit a danger that exists even in the judiciary and further highlights the delicate balance of maintaining a separation of power.

“For I agree that ‘there is no liberty if the power of judging be not separated from the legislative and executive powers.’ And it proves, in the last place, that as liberty can have nothing to fear from the judiciary alone, but would have everything to fear from its union with either of the other departments;”⁸

It is when the federal judiciary has functioned in its intended manner as a body of judgment and not of executive or legislative will that the Supreme Court has made its most credible, noble and longest lasting impacts on liberty. In the deliberative nature of the Court is the opportunity to visit the lasting principles upon which the nation was established, to study the laws of the land and determine their alignment with those principles, to testify to the actions of those in current society as to their adherence to those same essential principles. The Judiciary, when free from political motivations or coercion, has the ability to discern from the facts of the cases heard whether the United States continues to be a government of laws and not of men. The Supreme Court, lacking executive or legislative power and relying solely on judgement, is in essence called upon to be the conscience of the nation. The Court relies upon the willingness of the other branches to heed its rulings, but more importantly upon the willingness of the People, the sovereign in the American system of government. The Supreme Court has freedom and independence, but it has no force or will. Therefore, in order to move a nation the Court must persuade. It is this need to persuade that has allowed the Supreme Court to become an unexpected source of mentors and classics. When a decision is reached the Court offers us written opinions through which the judgement is made known. From John Jay, the first Supreme Court Justice to the newest Associate Justice of the Court, Neil Gorsuch, we see this judgement laid out before the nation.

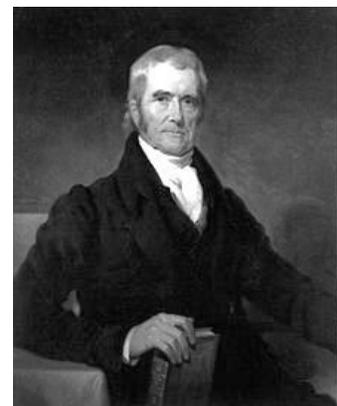
Behind every court decision is also a story, often referred to as the facts of the case. The story can be very compelling. Those who find sitting down to read a Supreme Court opinion challenging, or not among their normal repertoire, should begin by reading the story behind the opinion. Just as the stories contained in what we normally think of as classics connect us to essential questions and timeless principles, so too do the stories associated with legal opinions. People tend to care more about a topic when they have heard the story of those involved. The stories, the facts, coupled with the adversarial arguments and an

⁸*Ibid*, 466.

impartial reviewer seeking truth and justice, result in legal opinions being counted among the classics and those involved being counted among great mentors.

What is the story of the landmark Supreme Court case of *Marbury v. Madison*? It was early in the year 1801. America was still young and factions, which the founders had feared, were already beginning to form. Thomas Jefferson had just been elected president of the United States, but had not yet been inaugurated. The Congress, controlled by the Federalist Party, was concerned about the direction that Jefferson, a member of the Democratic-Republican Party, would lead the nation. Prior to Jefferson taking office the Federalist Congress passed two acts increasing the number of federal judgeships so that John Adams, the current President and also a member of the Federalist Party, could appoint Federalist judges to these newly created and vacant seats. The goal being to stack the judiciary with Federalist judges that could thwart the efforts of the incoming Jefferson administration. One of these commissions was given by President John Adams to William Marbury, a Federalist Party leader from Maryland. The Commission, although signed by Adams was not delivered to Marbury until after Jefferson took office. Because Marbury had not received the commission and had not been seated as a judge, Jefferson instructed James Madison, his Secretary of State to refuse the commission and block Marbury from serving. Marbury, believing he had been injured by the refusal of Jefferson to recognize his commission, filed a petition with the Supreme Court to hear his case.

Joined by three other justices in agreement with the majority opinion and no justices dissenting, (two justices did not take part in the proceedings of the case) Chief Justice John Marshall offered the opinion of the Court. This case became a landmark case in the life of the Supreme Court and the nation as it addressed significant questions about separation of powers, the supremacy of the Constitution and the role and power of the Supreme Court. The entire opinion is a critical read for anyone interested in understanding the Constitution and the relationship of the three branches of government to each other.



Henry Inman, "John Marshall"
(1832, Library of Virginia)

“Marshall’s masterful verdict has been widely hailed. In the face of attacks on the judiciary launched by Jefferson and his followers, Marshall needed to make a strong statement to maintain the status of the Supreme Court as the head of a coequal branch of government. By asserting the power to declare acts of Congress

unconstitutional (which the court would not exercise again for more than half a century), Marshall claimed for the court a paramount position as interpreter of the Constitution.”⁹

Following is an excerpt of the majority opinion:

“The question, whether an act, repugnant to the constitution, can become the law of the land, is a question deeply interesting to the United States; but, happily, not of an intricacy proportioned to its interest. It seems only necessary to recognise certain principles, supposed to have been long and well established, to decide it.

That the people have an original right to establish, for their future government, such principles as, in their opinion, shall most conduce to their own happiness, is the basis on which the whole American fabric has been erected. The exercise of this original right is a very great exertion; nor can it nor ought it to be frequently repeated. The principles, therefore, so established are deemed fundamental. And as the authority, from which they proceed, is supreme, and can seldom act, they are designed to be permanent...

...Certainly all those who have framed written constitutions contemplate them as forming the fundamental and paramount law of the nation, and consequently the theory of every such government must be, that an act of the legislature repugnant to the constitution is void.

This theory is essentially attached to a written constitution, and is consequently to be considered by this court as one of the fundamental principles of our society. It is not therefore to be lost sight of in the further consideration of this subject.

From these and many other selections which might be made, it is apparent, that the framers of the constitution [5 U.S. 137, 180] contemplated that instrument as a rule for the government of courts, as well as of the legislature...

⁹ Melvin Urofsky, “Marbury v. Madison” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Marbury-v-Madison> (accessed April 10, 2018).

...It is also not entirely unworthy of observation, that in declaring what shall be the supreme law of the land, the constitution itself is first mentioned; and not the laws of the United States generally, but those only which shall be made in pursuance of the constitution, have that rank.

Thus, the particular phraseology of the constitution of the United States confirms and strengthens the principle, supposed to be essential to all written constitutions, that a law repugnant to the constitution is void, and that courts, as well as other departments, are bound by that instrument.”¹⁰

From this excerpt of the published opinion the reader can get a sense of the magnitude of the subjects being considered by the Court as well as the ability of the justices to discuss them with all people throughout all time. Anyone today can pick up the *Marbury v. Madison* opinion and be immediately connected with the thoughts, opinions, and arguments of those involved in the legal case. Courts have been designed to bring together parties of opposing views who make arguments before an impartial judge that will provide a ruling. This adversarial nature of the court results in these opposing parties making their best arguments in order to achieve a favorable decision from the court. The Court hears these arguments, determines fact, and weighs all in light of the Constitution and the foundational principles contained therein.

Not every decision of every court is just or without error. Like every other government institution, the Supreme Court is made up of people. The Justices can be susceptible to influence, can be motivated by political or personal reasons, or can simply be in error. Justices motivated by these negative aspects of human nature, and not by virtue will offer up legal opinions not aligned with foundational truths or fundamental principles. These motivations can also be seen in written opinions in which the Court finds itself attempting to defend ideas or decisions that are not based on founding principles or objective truths. When Justices act in this manner the effect is a decision that tends toward deleterious impacts on individuals and society. A landmark case that has become studied as a classic in legal history due to the Court getting the decision so wrong is *Dred Scott v. Sanford*, 60 U.S. 393 (1857).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

What is the story behind *Dred Scott v. Sanford*? Dred Scott was a slave in the State of Missouri “belonging” to Dr. John Emerson, a US Army Doctor. Emerson was stationed by the Army in various locations while he held Scott and he brought Scott with him to these locations. One location was the State of Illinois which was a free state, another was the Wisconsin Territory, also free. Scott sued for his freedom and the freedom of his wife and children based on the premise that in living in States and Territories in which slavery was illegal made them free. Scott had prevailed in an earlier case and had won his freedom, but the case was overturned two years later by the Missouri Supreme Court. Even though other slaves had won their freedom under these same circumstances in state courts, Scott found himself caught up in the changing politics and attitudes on slavery. This



Louis Schultze “Dred Scott”
(1887, Missouri Historical Society)

legal challenge made its way to the Supreme Court, but it took many years to do so. In the decision of the court written by Chief Justice Taney we see the effort to justify political decisions and align the decision with political allies instead of a review of honest judgment. We see in *Scott v. Sanford* the danger as highlighted in Federalist 78 of a judiciary aligned with the interest of the executive and legislative powers acting toward a political end.

“It is true, every person, and every class and description of persons, who were at the time of the adoption of the Constitution recognised as citizens in the several States, became also citizens of this new political body; but none other; it was formed by them, and for them and their posterity, but for no one else. And the personal rights and privileges guaranteed to citizens of this new sovereignty were intended to embrace those only who were then members of the several State communities, or who should afterwards by birthright or otherwise become members, according to the provisions of the Constitution and the principles on which it was founded. It was the union of those who were at that time members of distinct and separate political communities into one political family, whose power, for certain specified purposes, was to extend over the whole territory of the United States. And it gave to each citizen rights and privileges outside of his State [60 U.S. 393, 407] which he did not before possess, and placed him in every other State upon a perfect equality with its own citizens as to rights of person and rights of property; it made him a citizen of

the United States.”¹¹

Further...

“But there are two clauses in the Constitution which point directly and specifically to the negro race as a separate class of persons, and show clearly that they were not regarded as a portion of the people or citizens of the Government then formed.

One of these clauses reserves to each of the thirteen States the right to import slaves until the year 1808, if it thinks proper. And the importation which it thus sanctions was unquestionably of persons of the race of which we are speaking, as the traffic in slaves in the United States had always been confined to them. And by the other provision the States pledge themselves to each other to maintain the right of property of the master, by delivering up to him any slave who may have escaped from his service, and be found within their respective territories. By the first above-mentioned clause, therefore, the right to purchase and hold this property is directly sanctioned and authorized for twenty years by the people who framed the Constitution. And by the second, they pledge themselves to maintain and uphold the right of the master in the manner specified, as long as the Government they then formed should endure. And these two provisions show, conclusively, that neither the description of persons therein referred to, nor their descendants, were embraced in any of the other provisions of the Constitution; for certainly these two clauses were not intended to confer on them or their posterity the blessings of liberty, or any of the personal rights so carefully provided for the citizen.”¹²

The decision was a split decision with Justice McLean and Justice Curtis dissenting. In the oft overlooked dissent, Justice McLean counters these notions of a Constitution that was not made for all people.

¹¹“Dred Scot v. Sanford, 60 U.S. 393,” US Supreme Court Opinion (1856), <http://caselaw.findlaw.com/us-supreme-court/60/393.html>.

¹² Ibid.

“We need not refer to the mercenary spirit which introduced the infamous traffic in slaves, to show the degradation of negro slavery in our country. This system was imposed upon our colonial settlements by the mother country, and it is due to truth to say that the commercial colonies and States were chiefly engaged in the traffic. But we know as a historical fact, that James Madison, that great and good man, a leading member in the Federal Convention, was solicitous to guard the language of that instrument so as not to convey the idea that there could be property in man.

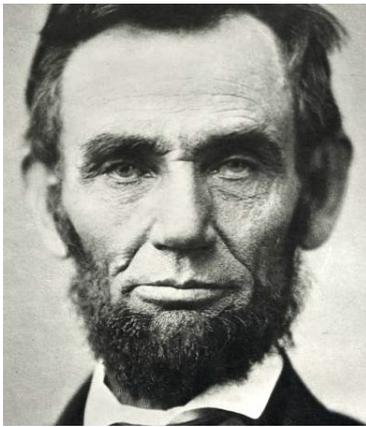
I prefer the lights of Madison, Hamilton, and Jay, as a means of construing the Constitution in all its bearings, rather than to look behind that period, into a traffic which is now declared to be piracy, and punished with death by Christian nations. I do not like to draw the sources of our domestic relations from so dark a ground. Our independence was a great epoch in the history of freedom; and while I admit the Government was not made especially for the colored race, yet many of them were citizens of the New England States, and exercised, the rights of suffrage when the Constitution was adopted, and it was not doubted by any intelligent person that its tendencies would greatly ameliorate their condition.

Many of the States, on the adoption of the Constitution, or [60 U.S. 393, 538] shortly afterward, took measures to abolish slavery within their respective jurisdictions; and it is a well-known fact that a belief was cherished by the leading men, South as well as North, that the institution of slavery would gradually decline, until it would become extinct. The increased value of slave labor, in the culture of cotton and sugar, prevented the realization of this expectation. Like all other communities and States, the South were influenced by what they considered to be their own interests.

But if we are to turn our attention to the dark ages of the world, why confine our view to colored slavery? On the same principles, white men were made slaves. All slavery has its origin in power, and is against right.”¹³

¹³ *Ibid.*

The majority opinion, written by Justice Taney, is flawed in its thinking and politically motivated in its direction. Not unlike other classics, *The Prince*, *Mein Kampf*, etc., that are written in error, the Dred Scott v. Sanford decision yields the opportunity for study of the associated principles and development of understanding of the truths that the error seeks to controvert. Even the flawed opinions such as that of Chief Justice Taney not only allow opportunity for dissent among their fellow justices, as seen by the dissenting opinion of Justices McClean and Curtis, but they also can inspire and motivate the actions of ordinary people to do extra-ordinary things. It could be argued that the Dred Scott decision was an event that helped to create the presidency of Abraham Lincoln and ultimately change the face of a nation.



Alexander Gardner, Photograph of Abraham Lincoln (Nov. 8, 1863)

After having completed one two-year term in the United States House of Representatives in 1849, Lincoln retired to Illinois to continue his law practice. In 1854 Congress narrowly passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act authored by Senator Stephen Douglas from Illinois. The issue of slavery had not been resolved by earlier compromise attempts, but continued to divide the nation. Now the Kansas-Nebraska Act removed the decision making authority regarding whether slavery would be legal in newly established states from Congress and transferred it to people living in those new states. It also undid the Missouri Compromise which outlawed slavery above the 36th parallel. Lincoln rightly saw the Kansas-Nebraska Act as an expansion of slavery and its passage compelled him to speak out publicly against slavery, the Act and Stephen Douglas.

Re-engaged in politics and already motivated by the issue of slavery, Lincoln, a lawyer by trade, was especially aware and influenced by the Dred Scott decision. It also impacted many of the writings, speeches and political actions that Lincoln took. Lincoln saw the decision as one piece in the political machinery created by the Democrats to expand slavery. Lincoln was not shy in publicizing his belief that President Buchanan, a Democrat, Chief Justice Taney, a Democrat and Democrat leaders in Congress, including Douglas were working in concert to manipulate the outcomes. In his speech on the Dred Scott Decision, Lincoln writes in depth about the findings of the court as well as the references of Stephen Douglas to the decision.

“In those days, by common consent, the spread of the black man’s bondage to new countries was prohibited; but now, Congress decides that it will not continue the prohibition, and the Supreme Court decides that it could not if it would. In those

days, our Declaration of Independence was held sacred by all, and thought to include all; but now, to aid in making the bondage of the negro universal and eternal, it is assailed, and sneered at, and construed, and hawked at, and torn, till, if its framers could rise from their graves, they could not at all recognize it. All the powers of earth seem rapidly combining against him. Mammon is after him; ambition follows, and philosophy follows, and the Theology of the day is fast joining the cry. They have him in his prison house; they have searched his person, and left no prying instrument with him. One after another they have closed the heavy iron doors upon him, and now they have him, as it were, bolted in with a lock of a hundred keys, which can never be unlocked without the concurrence of every key; the keys in the hands of a hundred different men, and they scattered to a hundred different and distant places; and they stand musing as to what invention, in all the dominions of mind and matter, can be produced to make the impossibility of his escape more complete than it is.”¹⁴

Without the Dred Scott decision, in concert with other egregious acts, we might not have the famous and beautiful “House Divided Speech” in which Lincoln lays out the political machinery and planning that aligned the Taney Court with the political powers seeking an expanse of slavery.

“A house divided against itself cannot stand.” I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new—North as well as South.”¹⁵

Another result of Lincoln’s outcry is the Lincoln-Douglas Debates which further increased his

¹⁴ Abraham Lincoln, “Speech on the Dred Scott Decision,” Springfield Illinois, June 26, 1857 <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/speech-on-the-dred-scott-decision/>.

¹⁵ Abraham Lincoln, “House Divided Speech,” Speech before the Republican State Convention, Springfield Illinois, June 16, 1858, <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/house-divided-speech/>.

notoriety and consideration of Lincoln for the presidency. It is not intended to be an oversimplification of the multitude of influences resulting in the presidency of Abraham Lincoln to say that one chief among them was the Dred Scott decision. It also cannot be disregarded as a significant contributing factor. This prairie farmer, thrust into politics by his principles and a nation on the brink of civil war, helped bring about the end of slavery in the United States of America. He serves across time as a great mentor through countless classics of speeches and writings.

There are so many more opinions written by the various Supreme Court Justices over the years, their number too voluminous to attempt to address here. While not all landmark cases, each opinion in its own way has the potential of being a classic. Each has the potential of speaking to the reader today, connecting the reader to noble ideas and foundational principles . . . challenging . . . provoking. The Justices don't always get it right. When they do not it is the people, the sovereign, dependence upon whom "is, no doubt, the primary control on the government," that must take up that challenge. For we the people, the courts, the people that make them up and the opinions they produce become an unexpected source of mentors and classics. Behind every legal opinion is a story and those stories are worth reading. Those stories do not only impact the litigants, the characters, in those stories. The decisions that come from those stories impact each of us. The people must strive to find mentors and classics among the works of law and in doing so ensure that the United States of America remains a government of laws and not of men. So that "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."¹⁶

¹⁶ Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address," Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, November 19, 1863, <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/gettysburg-address/>.

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Lessons in Leadership in Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Shakespeare's *Richard II*

By Zeta Cammarota

In liberal arts circles, academic types talk about the “Great Conversation”, the ongoing discussion about the perennial questions of mankind found in the “Great Books” of Western Civilization. Following a particular question from text to text is one of the intellectual joys found when reading this great literature, at least for literary nerds like myself. The question of what makes a good head of state is an example of one such ongoing conversation. On opposite ends of the spectrum, Plato argued for a Philosopher-King, both virtuous and wise, and Machiavelli, for a Prince unburdened by scruples. One may not associate William Shakespeare as part of this conversation, but within the pages of his history plays, one has the sneaking suspicion that he most definitely has something to say about the subject. Machiavelli’s political theories, in particular, seem to interest him. About a half century after *The Prince* was published,¹⁷ Shakespeare took it upon himself to test Machiavelli’s pragmatic solutions to the problems of governance. Being the inquisitive realist that he is, Shakespeare does not dismiss Machiavelli out of hand for his unconventional and at times immoral maxims. Instead, he invites us to explore how Machiavelli’s ideas play out in the characters and the events of his own stories.



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In *Richard II*, Shakespeare presents two very different leaders in the characters of King Richard II and his cousin and rival, Henry Hereford, also known as Bullingbrook. Throughout the play, Richard II is a dismal failure as a king. He is neither an upright Christian king nor a underhanded Machiavellian leader. On the other hand, Bullingbrook follows Machiavelli’s advice with great success. He is such a crafty leader we can never be sure of his true motivations. Through these two characters, Shakespeare affirms the

¹⁷ Machiavelli lived from 1469 to 1527. Shakespeare lived from 1564 to 1616.

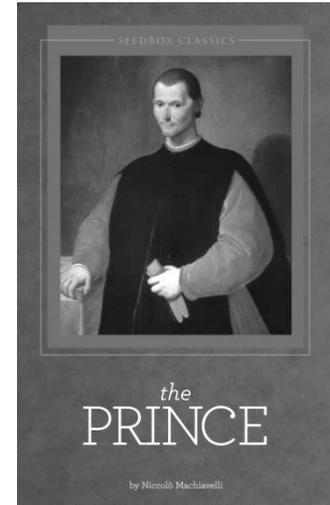
pragmatism of Machiavelli's message while also warning of its long term effects on the social order.

Being the rightful heir to the English throne, Richard should be secure in his position. As Machiavelli states, "If [an hereditary] prince is of ordinary industry, he will always maintain himself in his state...for the natural prince has less cause and less necessity to offend; hence it is fitting that he be more loved. And if extraordinary vices do not make him hated, it is reasonable that he will naturally have the good will of his own."¹⁸

Unfortunately Richard does have a few extraordinary vices which alienate him from the good will of both his people and his nobles. These vices are rather costly: "the commons hath he pill'd with grievous taxes / And quite lost their hearts. The nobles hath he fin'd / For ancient quarrels and quite lost their hearts."¹⁹ As Machiavelli predicts, Richard is in a precarious state. Both the people and his nobles are ready to turn against him for bleeding them dry. He has no one to blame but himself, for he has rid himself of the good

counsel of his uncles, York and Lancaster, and instead favors the flattery of Bushy, Bagot, and Green. The most powerful noble in the north, Northumberland, complains that the king is "basely led / By flatterers."²⁰ On his deathbed, Richard's uncle, the Duke of Lancaster, the wealthiest man in England and father to Bullingbrook, attempts to sway Richard from his wasteful ways telling him, "A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown."²¹ Too bad Richard does not heed the advice of either his uncle or Machiavelli:

I do not want to leave out an important point and an error from which princes defend themselves with difficulty, unless they are very prudent or make good choices. And these are the flatterers of whom courts are full; for men take such pleasure in their own affairs and so deceive themselves there that they defend themselves with difficulty from this plague, and in trying to defend oneself from it one risks the danger of becoming contemptible. For there is no other way to guard oneself from flattery unless men understand that they do not offend you in telling you the truth; but when everyone can tell you the truth, they lack reverence for you. Therefore, a prudent prince must hold to a third mode, choosing wise men



The Prince by Niccolò Machiavelli. (Rome, 1532)

¹⁸ Machiavelli, Niccolo, and Harvey Mansfield. *The Prince*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. Pg. 7

¹⁹ Shakespeare, William. *Richard II*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1998. 2.1.246-248

²⁰ *Ibid.* 2.1.241-242

²¹ *Ibid.* 2.1.100

in his state; and only to these should he give freedom to speak the truth to him, and of those things only that he asks about and nothing else. But he should ask them about everything and listen to their opinions; then he should decide for himself, in his own mode; and with these councils and with each member of them he should behave in such a mode that everyone knows that the more freely he speaks, the more he will be accepted. Aside from these, he should not want to hear anyone; he should move directly to the thing that was decided and be obstinate in his decisions. Whoever does otherwise either falls headlong because of flatterers or changes often because of the variability of views, from which a low estimation of him arises.²²

From the first scene in the play, we are made painfully aware that Richard is not concerned with the truth. His own uncle Gloucestershire has been murdered, and he wants to silence both the accuser, Bullingbrook, and the defendant, Mowbray. He first tries to command their silence. But they refuse. Instead of fearing Richard's wrath, they outright disobey his demands to put away their quarrel. He then acquiesces to their request for trial by combat, but changes his mind just as they are to strike. Richard interrupts the trial by combat mid-charge and banishes both Bullingbrook and Mowbray. He appears weak and capricious.

Believing he has rid himself of the problem of Bullingbrook, Richard goes on to commit the crime that finally breaks the back of his nobles: upon the death of the Duke of Lancaster, Henry Bullingbrook's father, Richard seizes the inheritance of the banished Bullingbrook for himself. If only he had listened to these words of Machiavelli:

The prince should nonetheless make himself feared in such a mode that if he does not acquire love, he escapes hatred, because being feared and not being hated can go together very well. This he will always do if he abstains from the property of his citizens and his subjects, and from their women; and if he also needs to proceed against someone's life, he must do it when there is suitable justification and manifest cause for it. But above all, he must abstain from the property of others, because men forget the death of a father more quickly than the loss of a

²² Machiavelli. *The Prince*. 93-94

patrimony.²³

The nobles can forgive Richard his excesses, but they cannot forgive him seizing the property of one of their own to fill his coffers for an ill-advised war with the Irish. The nobles, led by Northumberland, immediately begin plotting the return of Bullingbrook to England with the implied hope that Bullingbrook will replace Richard as king.

If then we shall shake off our slavish yoke,
 Imp out our drooping country's broken wing,
 Redeem from broking pawn the blemish'd crown,
 Wipe off the dust that hides our sceptre's gilt,
 And make high majesty look like itself²⁴

The nobles have had enough of Richard. As Machiavelli claims, by seizing another's property, he has incurred their hatred to the point that they will commit treason. Without the support of the nobles, Richard has no army to defend himself. To fight his war in Ireland, he was forced to hire mercenaries. Once again, if he had listened to Machiavelli, he would know he could not count on a mercenary army.

Mercenary and auxiliary arms are useless and dangerous; and if one keeps his state founded on mercenary arms one will never be firm or secure; for they are disunited, ambitious, without discipline, unfaithful; bold among friends, among enemies cowardly; no fear of God, or faith with men; ruin is postponed only as long as attack is postponed; and in peace you are despoiled by them, in war by the enemy. The cause of this is that they have no love nor cause to keep them in the field other than a small stipend, which is not sufficient to make them want to die for you. They do indeed want to be your soldiers while you are not making war, but when war comes, they either flee or leave.²⁵

²³ Ibid. 67

²⁴ Shakespeare. *Richard II*. 2.1.291-295

²⁵ Machiavelli. *The Prince*. 48-49

Sure enough, Richard's army flees as soon as they hear the nobles have gone over to Bullingbrook's side.

Richard is the epitome of what not to do as a leader. He is wasteful, he surrounds himself with flatterers, he confiscates the property of his nobles, and he relies on mercenaries to fight for him. In all fairness to Richard, he did not have the benefit of learning from Machiavelli as his reign took place 100 years before *The Prince* was published.

However, his rival for the crown, Bullingbrook, also did not have this opportunity, and yet he seems to follow Machiavelli's advice all the way to the throne of England.

Upon being banished, Bullingbrook makes sure he courts the love of the people before leaving England. Richard finds this disgusting.



Richard II handing Henry Bullingbrook the crown.
The Hollow Crown: Richard II. (Great Performances, 2013)

Observ'd his courtship to the common people,
 How he did seem to dive into their hearts
 With humble and familiar courtesy,
 What reverence he did throw away on slaves,
 Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles
 And patient underbearing of his fortune,
 As 'twere to banish their affects with him.
 Off goes his bonnet to an oysterwench.
 A brace of draymen bid God speed him well
 And had the tribute of his supple knee,
 With 'Thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends',
 As were our England in reversion his,
 And he our subjects' next degree in hope.²⁶

²⁶ Shakespeare. *Richard II.* 1.4.24-36

Richard is right to fear Bullingbrook. Unfortunately for him, he does not understand the value of having the support of the people and doesn't seek to win their love as Machiavelli recommends.

In contrast to Richard's loquaciousness, Bullingbrook is a man of few words. He rarely says more than is necessary. He does not even have a soliloquy in this play. We can only laugh at Northumberland as he tries to flatter Bullingbrook by describing his speech as "sugar" and "sweet and delectable."²⁷ Bullingbrook will have none of it. "Of much less value is my company / Than your good words."²⁸ He is either truly humble or truly astute. Unlike Richard, Bullingbrook is not swayed by flattery.

Bullingbrook is also an opportunist. Following Machiavelli's advice, he takes full advantage of the fortune that comes his way. When describing successful leaders, Machiavelli says,

As one examines their actions and lives, one does not see that they had anything else from fortune than the opportunity, which gave them the matter enabling them to introduce any form they pleased. Without that opportunity their virtue of spirit would have been eliminated, and without that virtue the opportunity would have come in vain.²⁹

Bullingbrook has been banished, his father has died in his absence, and his property has been seized by the king. While these misfortunes may crush a lesser man, Bullingbrook uses them as a legitimate reason to return to England and gather the support of the nobles and common people.

By returning from banishment, Bullingbrook could be accused of breaking the law. But with a little twist, he justifies his actions by saying, "As I was banish'd, I was banish'd Hereford; / But as I come, I come for Lancaster."³⁰ Due to a technicality of surnames, he claims to not be the same person that was banished. The change in his title gives him cover to return to England.

Richard's seizure of his properties gives Bullingbrook the moral authority to fight the king for his rightful property. Since all first born sons inherit their father's titles and land, no father or son can feel safe with Richard as king. By breaking the law of primogeniture, Richard in fact undermines his own right to the throne of England. York reminds Richard of this fact, before it is known that Bullingbrook is back on

²⁷ Ibid. 2.3.6,7,13

²⁸ Ibid. 2.3.19-20

²⁹ Machiavelli. *The Prince*. 23

³⁰ Shakespeare. *Richard II*. 2.3.112-113

English soil. “Take Herford’s rights away and take from time / His charters and his customary rights...For how art thou a king / But by fair sequence and succession? ...You pluck a thousand dangers on your head, / You lose a thousand well-disposed hearts.”³¹ Such lack of respect for the rightful laws of succession opens the door to Bullingbrook’s unlawful ascension to the throne. However, before Bullingbrook seizes the throne, he is sure to let everyone know he is only back in England to claim his rightful inheritance. Whether or not Bullingbrook returned to English soil with the full intent of seizing the throne or merely to claim his inheritance, we do not know. He successfully puts on the appearance of virtue, as every leader should according to Machiavelli. But when the opportunity comes to take the throne from Richard, he does not hesitate.

Thus, it is not necessary for a prince to have all the [virtues] in fact, but it is necessary to appear to have them. Nay, I dare say this, that by having them and always observing them, they are harmful; and by appearing to have them, they are useful, as it is to appear merciful, faithful, humane, honest, and religious, and to be so; but to remain with a spirit built so that, if you need not to be those things, you are able and know how to change to the contrary.³²

By playing the innocent, Bullingbrook successfully turns a seemingly impossible situation into an opportunity for advancement.

Bullingbrook is also quick to eliminate his enemies. Richard’s flatterers, Bushy and Green, are executed for having taken his lands. Once he becomes king, he wonders, “Have I no friend will rid me of this living fear?”³³ Bullingbrook never explicitly orders Richard to be killed, but those in the room know what he means and carry out his wish. All who conspire against him are quickly executed. Once again, Bullingbrook follows Machiavelli: “Hence it should be noted that in taking hold of a state, he who seizes it should review all the offenses necessary for him to commit, and do them all at a stroke, so as not to have to renew them every day and, by not renewing them, to secure men and gain them to himself with benefits.”³⁴ All opposition to Bullingbrook’s kingship is eradicated before the curtain closes.

By the end of the play, it would seem as if following Machiavellian principles is the way to gain and

³¹ *Ibid.* 2.1.195-196,198-199,205-206

³² Machiavelli. *The Prince*. 7

³³ Shakespeare. *Richard II*. 5.4.2

³⁴ Machiavelli. *The Prince*. 38

keep power. Bullingbrook has gained the love of the people, he has the support of the nobles, he appears to be just and noble, he is not swayed by flattery, he maximizes opportunities, and he eliminates his enemies quickly. We may be tempted to believe Shakespeare has illustrated the advantage of Machiavellian realism over the idealism of Christian Kingship. Believing God decides who rules via the law of primogeniture is an outdated idea. However, Shakespeare has more to say on the subject. Through the characters of Richard and the Bishop of Carlisle, Shakespeare makes two predictions. Richard warns Northumberland that his place of favor will be short lived.

Northumberland, thou ladder wherewithal

The mounting Bullingbrook ascends my throne,
 The time shall not be many hours of age
 More than it is ere foul sin gathering head
 Shall break into corruption. Thou shalt think
 Though he divide the realm and give thee half
 It is too little, helping him to all.
 He shall think that thou which knowest the way
 To plan unrightful kings wilt know again,
 Being ne'er so little urg'd, another way
 To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.³⁵

Perhaps Richard has been communing with Machiavelli after all. Once again, Machiavelli predicts,

He who comes to the principality with the aid of the great maintains himself with more difficulty than one who becomes prince with the aid of the people, because the former finds himself prince with the aid of the people, because the former finds himself prince with many around him who appear to be his equals, and because of this he can neither command them nor manage them to suit himself.”³⁶

How right both Richard and Machiavelli are with this prediction. Kingmakers cannot be trusted. In the first

³⁵ Shakespeare. *Richard II*. 5.1.55-68

³⁶ Machiavelli. *The Prince*. 39

act of the next play, Bullingbrook, now Henry IV, is at odds with Northumberland, and civil war is brewing. Northumberland has someone else in mind for the throne, who apparently has a better claim than Bullingbrook ever did.

Embedded in the quote from Richard is disease imagery. Below the surface of victory is a boil waiting to break out. Civil war is festering. Upsetting the established order will have dire consequences. The Bishop of Carlisle is more explicit:

And if you crown him let me prophesy:
The blood of English shall manure the ground
And future ages groan for this foul act.
Peace shall go sleep with Turks and infidels,
And in this seat of peace tumultuous wars
Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound.
Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny
Shall here inhabit, and this land be call'd
The field of Golgotha and dead men's skulls.
Oh, if you raise this house against this house
It will the woofullest division prove
That ever fell upon this cursed earth.³⁷

Following Machiavellian principles may have enabled Bullingbrook to achieve the throne, but at what cost? Upsetting the established order, even for a good cause, opens the door to ruling by might rather than by right. Hence, the seed for the War of the Roses is sewn on the day Bullingbrook ascends the throne by these "indirect crooked ways."³⁸

Shakespeare presents us with a dilemma. Richard is a bad king. He abuses his power and England once "bound in with the triumphant sea...is now bound in with shame."³⁹ Yet Bullingbrook can free England from this bondage. He is a natural leader and far more politically prudent than Richard. He will return England to her former glory. How enticing it is to overlook the means he uses because we support

³⁷ Shakespeare. *Richard II*. 4.1.136-147

³⁸ Shakespeare. *2 Henry IV*. 4.5.198

³⁹ Shakespeare. *Richard II*. 2.1.61, 63

his end goal. However, if the means are unjust and contrary to the law, disorder will follow. Bullingbrook ignores the established laws of his country and will henceforth be known as usurper. His reign is fraught with civil war. Now that the nobles have seen one man trample down the rightful laws of succession, many of them believe they too can become king by eliminating those who stand in their way. Can the leader who only has the appearance of virtue gain the respect of his people? Eventually they realize that if his actions do not correspond to his words, the leader cannot be trusted.

As Machiavelli points out, political prudence may be a necessary skill for leaders. Richard's lack of it helps bring about his downfall and Bullingbrook's expertise helps him rise to power. But Shakespeare posits that this is not enough. The laws of a society cannot be ignored, even by those in the highest positions of power, without consequence. The need for justice is a deep seated law of nature written on the hearts of every human being. Both Richard and Bullingbrook violate the laws of their society. Bullingbrook may gain power, but "in this seat of peace tumultuous wars / Shall kin with kin and kind with kind confound. / Disorder, horror, fear and mutiny / Shall here inhabit."⁴⁰ Years of civil war is the price.

It may be tempting to turn all questions of political theory to the experiential as Machiavelli did, but to ignore the ideals of the just society is an error. Knowledge of political statecraft indubitably is a great asset for leaders, but being a just leader is fundamental. No matter what system of governance we choose, the natural laws of justice must be its first principles and apply to all members of that society.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 139-143

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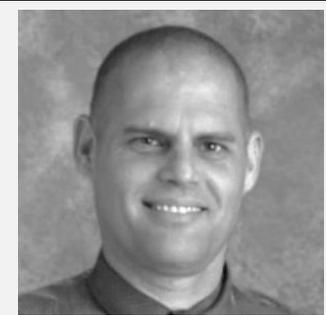
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Letters of Affection: Moral Epistles to Lucilius

By Michael Boal

Most of us make our way through life with as little mentoring from others as possible. Truth *hurts*, as the old saying goes, and so it is a human tendency to avoid the threat of wounding words in the same way that deer shy away from the company of lions. Some, finding their disappointments outweighing their loves, may search for counsel in the passing hours, here from a program, there from an article, while others shield themselves about with noise and industry, suffering no ingress of wisdom whatsoever. But with rare exception, people are simply unwilling to expose themselves to the prospects of actual mentoring. A recent analysis of U.S. Census data finds the number of the adults engaged in the practice has hovered at one percent for a decade.¹ Perhaps we are too perfect, too busy, or just find the idea of accountability too scary. Whatever the excuses, they are clearly strongholds,



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and so it is unlikely that many will take to the guidance of written words, but for any who would the faithful mentorship and steady emphasis on the classics in Lucius Annaeus Seneca's *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilium* gives criticism of the gentlest kind, nurturing those whom it wounds and bruises, raising to fresh splendor every proud refuge it burns to the ground.

Seneca clearly wrote his letters for the eyes of his pen pal Lucilius, yet they were equally, if not especially, meant for a universal audience². The device of their intimate epistolary form, not uncommon among earlier classical writers and most famously adopted by Paul in his New Testament letters to the early churches, lends every reader the full liberty of either bravely receiving the arrows of exhortation and admonishment, that is, of conceiving the written words as aimed at them too, or alternatively, of reserving safe distance for some contemplation and to trust, if only momentarily, that the only target of the sharp writing is some poor Lucilius or some miserable Corinthians. Within the ambiguity, Seneca finds plenty of

¹ Raposa, Dietz, Rhodes. *Trends in Volunteer Mentoring in the United States: Analysis of a Decade of Census Survey Data* (2017).

² Seneca *Epist 11* (I am working for later generations, writing down some ideas that may be of assistance to them.) Trans. Gummere.

room to prowl. By mode and medium, he demands action, but he consistently succors his initiate (and us) with a lacing of direct and indirect appeals, a design which resides in the very first words:

*Ita fac, mi Lucili*³

Do thus, my Lucilius...

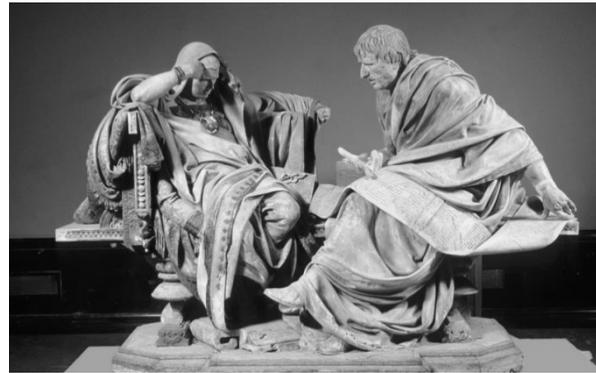
Like the *Aeneid*'s famous *arma virumque cano*, (wars and a man I sing⁴), the very first words yield the entire text's countervailing themes: direct instruction, (do what I say), and indirect instruction, (if ye may). We are roughly commanded, but just as much warmly invited. Either method steals results, but here in concert, they forge the more lasting, sympathetic bonds of great mentoring. Direct instruction, the eternal love of sergeants and fathers, managers and teachers, wins some but loses others, for the heart and mind are not simply minerals to be put to purpose, spun as clay into pottery or etched like silicon into microchips. Learners resist. From the age of two to the dawn of eighty, few people love being told what to do. Some grasp this truth early, others learn by getting married. On the other hand, *ita fac* is often the superior or only course. No one sidesteps a bayonet by socratic discussion, and if any of us can chant our times tables, or can pour a decent cappuccino, or have ever apologized nicely to our little brother, we are in some debt to clear and direct instruction. Indirect instruction, meanwhile, which eschews all friction to tenderly inspire noble duties or habits, is regularly spoiled of its hopes by the fact that many learners prefer great stupors of inertia to any actual performance.

To the great fortune of posterity, Lucilius turned out not to be a student who shied away from the style of mentoring Seneca offered. He inclined both ears, asked questions when in doubt, made joyful leaps of faith—so long as we assume that the man actually existed. Unhappily, there are no additional mentions of the historical Lucilius outside the writings of the author. But it hardly matters. Whether the *Epistulae Morales* track the moral progress of a real human being, or, as most scholars believe, simply plant a straw man in the cornfields of Senecan thought, they lend animate and informative discourse between a pupil and a master whose quarry, at the moment, is really us.

³ *Epistle 1.1*

⁴ p.47 *The Aeneid*, trans. Robert Fagles.

Whatever Lucilius' story, the *Epistulae* offer each reader mentoring from a scholar at both the height and end of his wisdom. And what a scholar. Centuries before the phrase had any meaning, Seneca was a renaissance man. Having lived a full life in devotion to the teachings of the Stoa, a philosophical school that held sway the better part of a millenium until the great ascendance of Christianity in the fourth century A.D., he wrote the Epistles amid full certainty that he would shortly be executed⁵ by the vindictive emperor Nero. In brighter days, he had been twice as lively. He had tutored and mentored the (saner) emperor and had known his full confidence; his literary achievements included a satire of the emperor Claudius, eight of the finest Roman tragedies, and exceptional Stoic treatises on such topics as anger, providence, and the art of living well⁶. Even the man's stoicism was impressive. In contrast to simpler, and one might note easier religions and philosophies of the day, it packaged a holistic, logically reasoned explanation for the things external to men, such as the laws of Nature, the nature of God, and the physics of the material world, with a careful survey of things *internal*, such as the nature of emotions, the duties to self and state, and the nature of love for others. For Seneca however, even the fullness of this teaching was simply a starting point. He could have written with grace and power simply delineating the Stoic position, but remarkably, in mentoring Lucilius he emphasized not only the orthodoxies of house doctrine but the entire canon of classical thought.



**Eduardo Barrón, "Nero and Seneca"
(1904, Museo del Prado, Madrid)**

Though mostly receptive to Seneca's mentoring, a number of epistles hint that Lucilius often relapsed to trusting in his tangible riches, seeking refuge in the high ground of his rank and station⁷, or the shifting sands of his attendant fears. Having many cares, he was anxious of them all. Rather than remind his friend of his own authority, Seneca extolled the value of other mentors, the mortals who guide in word and action, and likewise the value of the classics, the durable metals of their science and art. Pointing to the example of his beloved Zeno⁸, but also to the likes of Sallust, Cicero, and Homer, and even to the inimical Epicurus, the founder of the anti-Stoic philosophy of Epicureanism, Seneca showed how classical writers

⁵ He avoided this by suicide.

⁶ *de ira; de providentia; de vita beata*

⁷ *Epistle xxxi* suggests he was procurator of Sicily, a position with fiduciary and perhaps judicial powers.

⁸ Founder of the the Stoic school in 300 B.C.

and mentors sift eternal goods out of the confusion of worldly concerns by revealing clearly *to what purpose* one should devote their time and attention. In the second epistle, as often, he neatly dovetails the value of classics and mentors into a single metaphor that warns Lucilius that slighting the one is the same as betraying the other.

Be careful, however, lest this reading of many authors and books of every sort may tend to make you discursive and unsteady. You must linger among a limited number of master thinkers, and digest their works, if you would derive ideas which shall win firm hold in your mind. Everywhere means nowhere. When a person spends all his time in foreign travel, he ends by having many acquaintances, but no friends. And the same thing must hold true of men who seek intimate acquaintance with no single author, but visit them all in a hasty and hurried manner.⁹

It may be noted that Seneca’s image of friendship here, *amicitia* in the Latin, is a narrower concept than the modern term *mentor* (which in any case was not in circulation at the time, being a far later coinage¹⁰), but all of the *Epistles’* mentions of the term paint a relationship that goes far beyond the standard advantages of grabbing a beer or borrowing a hammer. In fact, the exquisite value of *amicitia*, according to Seneca, is nothing of its utility, for a man “to have someone sit by him when he is ill,” but entirely its agency for spending virtue, “that he may have someone by whose sick-bed he himself may sit.”¹¹ This principle surely is at the core of a mentoring relationship. The disciple at her desk or Lucilius in his province is not there for the harvest, but for the soil of sowing virtue, of spending over-filled reservoirs of knowledge and love. And if there be reciprocity, for the purpose of improving the other: “Associate with those who will make a better man of you. Welcome those whom you



Luca Giordano, “Death of Seneca”
(1684-5, Louvre Museum, Paris)

⁹ *Epistle 2.2*

¹⁰ 1750 A.D. according to the *Online Etymological Dictionary*.

¹¹ *Epistle 9.8*

yourself can improve. The process is mutual; for men learn while they teach.”¹²

Seneca understood that classical thought, indeed knowledge itself, was only complete when alloyed with mentoring friendships. He notes,

“Cleanthes could not have been the express image of Zeno, if he had merely heard his lectures; he shared in his life, saw into his hidden purposes, and watched him to see whether he lived according to his own rules. Plato, Aristotle¹³, and the whole throng of sages who were destined to go each his different way, derived more benefit from the character than from the words of Socrates.”¹⁴

While his consummate aim was to draw Lucilius into a growing fidelity with the practices of Stoicism, where he would learn to escape every rival philosophy and brutish insensibility, Seneca wisely recognized that most realms of wisdom are not so much personal space as common property. Being a good Stoic he would likely have shuddered at the thought of Lucilius dropping the plow to run after the Peripatetics or Epicureans, but he never hesitates to adopt their higher thoughts. In *Epistle IX*, he writes, “You must not think that our school alone can utter noble words”. And again, in XVI, “Whatever is well said by anyone is mine.” Worthy mentors, in Seneca’s view, were not only to be found among the perfect sages of pure Stoicism—of which indeed there were none, and in fact by the lights of their own doctrine, could never be any, only those who were earnestly *improving*—but truly from the ranks of all who, seeking virtue, had sunk a spade beneath the mountain of ignorance and dug up a diamond for the common good.

Some, finding refuge in the multitude, hold there is no need for mentors, that the wisdom of one can just as easily be gained from the many. This is not unreasonable. Moral fitness, to be sure, can be improved by the company we keep. And conceivably, in some moments of life, as in certain times in history, our worthy influences, those mentors *e pluribus* could be as thick as thieves. As Seneca imagined above, during certain mornings in Athens, then in certain evenings at Rome, the porticoes must have been swirling with men of genius and affinity. So too in its way perhaps even an ordinary life, like those scenes of history, will see its golden ages. It is not so rare, over the course of a lifetime, to stumble into a small group of friends, classmates, or colleagues whose influence is so virtuous that moral guidance loses its formality

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Seneca stumbles here: Aristotle could not have met Socrates.

¹⁴ *Epistle 6.6*

and takes on a sort of intimacy. Then truly, like Plato in the circle of Socrates, we gather as much from the actions of others as from their mentoring words. But such fine moments, if they come at all, are exceptional. Much more commonly, even in the wine press of social stimulation, the human heart treads in lonely isolation, its trusted mentors far removed so that any wanting counsel are tempted to turn to strangers. Seneca gives another option:

“Whom,” you say, “shall I call upon? Shall it be this man or that?” There is another choice also open to you; you may go to the ancients; for they have time to help you. We can get assistance not only from the living, but from those of the past.”¹⁵

Granted, not everybody runs to the dead for advice. Most might prefer to talk to the cat, or if kitty is in a feline mood, to a houseplant. But consider how great the advantage: from the corpus of classical authors, a reader may broaden or strengthen their grasp of language, art, math, philosophy, science, music, logic, history, medicine, grammar, architecture, poetics—in sum all or nearly half the heavens of things rational, spiritual, or aesthetic. Some unfortunately shy from the ancients out of a sense of terror or dread. As C.S. Lewis notes, “The student . . . feels himself inadequate [to a classical author] and thinks he will not understand him. But if he only knew, the great man, just because of his greatness, is much more intelligible than his modern commentator.”¹⁶ How sad this is—the *Epistulae*, as we have seen, contain not just the intelligible mentoring of their singular author, great as he was, but of nearly all of *his* mentors. Even if all of these were missing or dead, the writing alone is an intimate and worthy companion. Yet they are all there. University of London professor Catherine Edwards identifies the mentors within the classic, praising the integrity of the vessel for the quality of the vintage: “Seneca’s incantatory prose works hard to summon up these men as individual presences whose behavior, vividly described, can still be exemplary.”¹⁷

The final, most persistent refuge from the classical mentoring of Seneca’s *Epistulae Morales* may very well rest on religious grounds. Not a few religious persons resist any ethical teachings that come from sources beyond the sacred authorities. The doctrine of *sola scriptura*, for example, which though fraught with contention from its very meaning through its every application, has led many a devout to limit all ethical considerations to the onion skin pages of a bedside Bible. In other faiths naturally the predilection is

¹⁵ *Epistle 52.7*

¹⁶ p.4 Introduction to Athanasius’ *on the Incarnation*..

¹⁷ p. 49 *The Cambridge Companion to Seneca* “Absent Presence in Seneca’s Epistles: Philosophy and Friendship.”

to other witnesses or traditions. In any case, wishing to obey a sovereign, many resist unorthodox moral teaching less from a hardness of heart than from a tenderness of affection. The writings of the *Epistulae Morales* however, being classical in construction and mentoring in intention are far more ecumenical than restrictive to Stoicism, and often make observations that are consistent with religious feeling, and not infrequently redolent of it.

*God is near you, he is with you, he is within you.
This is what I mean, Lucilius: a holy spirit indwells within us,
one who marks our good and bad deeds, and is our guardian.
As we treat this spirit, so are we treated by it.
Indeed, no man can be good without the help of God.¹⁸*

¹⁸ *Epistle 41.1-2*

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Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics: A Guide to Virtue

By Melody Van Tassell

Today, self-help is a big business. Between books, inspirational apps, and TV shows, people are asking the question of how they can improve their lives. Most of these books will be mere fads that will pass away in a few years, ending up at a thrift shop before eventually being thrown out. However, the self-help books that really matter aren't usually labeled as self-help at all; they are books about philosophy. With a question as essential to human life as how to live, it is best to go to some of the first thoughts that humanity has recorded on the subject. One of the most important of these early books, and arguably the first book to treat the subject exclusively and in depth, is Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.



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Aristotle, who wrote 2400 years ago, is an author that few people seriously read today.¹ This is unfortunate given his contributions to not only philosophy, but also to natural science, medicine, and drama, to name a few. The *Ethics* is his work discussing the meaning of virtue and how to be virtuous. Aristotle proposed that in order to live a good life, one must perform the proper action of a human being, and perform that action well. But what is the proper action of a human being, the action that is most definitive of and most exclusively human?

Aristotle says that the work of a human being is “a certain life, and this is an activity of soul and actions accompanied by reason . . . if this is so—then the human good becomes an activity of the soul in accord with virtue, and if there are several virtues, then in accord with the best and most complete one.”² It is fitting, then, that a human being has to act in accord with reason in order to be good; after all, reason is what separates humanity from the rest of the animals. Any good action, any action that builds up a human being as a human being, not merely as an animal, must use this distinctive power of reason. A hammer

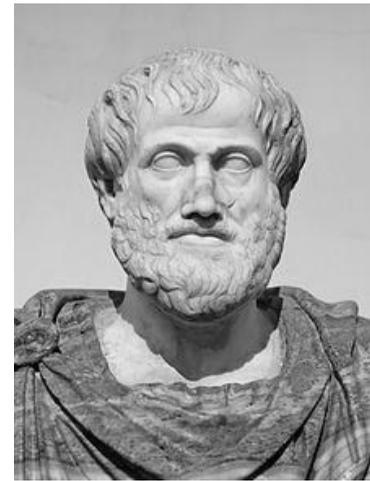
¹Anselm H. Amadio and Anthony J.P. Kenny, "Aristotle," Encyclopædia Britannica, March 28, 2018, , accessed April 01, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Aristotle>.

² Aristotle, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 1098a13-18.

would not be a very good hammer if it never hammered nails. A human being who does not use his or her reason isn't acting as a good human being; quite simply, they are not completely fulfilling their humanity.

In order to live well, one must live in accord with virtue as well as reason. Aristotle defines two types of virtues, both intellectual and moral, but he focuses on the moral virtues. He distinguishes them, saying, “Both the coming-into-being and increase of intellectual virtue result mostly from teaching- hence it requires experience and time- whereas moral virtue is the result of habit.. It is also clear, as a result, that none of the moral virtues are present in us by nature, since nothing that exists by nature is habituated to be other than it is.”³ Moral virtue originates in habit, which means that human beings are in control of the level of moral virtues that they attain. There is nothing inborn that makes someone virtuous, nor anything that makes them unvirtuous. Anyone can attain virtue through repeated action. Habit is key: even if a particular action is a virtuous action, just one instance does not make a virtuous person. No one would deem a habitual murderer virtuous if he once serves at a soup kitchen. On the positive side, one unvirtuous action does not make someone unvirtuous unless it becomes a habit. This means that virtue can increase and decrease within a life based on how a person acts.

Aristotle further defines virtue as “a characteristic marked by choice, residing in the mean relative to us.”⁴ This has two parts—that of choice, and that of the mean, or middle ground. Choice means that virtue requires reason. The virtue must be chosen for its own sake in order to be truly virtuous. Someone may stumble upon virtuous actions without choosing them, just as someone may stumble upon unvirtuous actions without choosing them. However, that person's virtue is determined by what they have chosen. This ties back to what Socrates, who is regarded as the philosophical grandfather to Aristotle, says in the *Apology* before he is sentenced to death, “it is the greatest good for a man to discuss virtue every day . . . for the unexamined life is not worth living for men.”⁵ It requires discussion and careful thought to understand virtue and what constitutes a virtuous action. If virtue leads to happiness, the ultimate goal of life, then it is foolish to leave it up to chance. The only way to make it a habit is to use reason to aim one's life at virtuous action.



Marble Bust of Aristotle.
Roman copy after a Greek bronze
original by Lysippos (330 BC)

³ *Ibid.*, 1103a14-20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1106b36-1107a1.

⁵ Plato, “*Apology*”, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009), 38a5.

The second part of this statement has to do with the mean, which is a mean between two extremes. According to Aristotle, each virtue has two vices, that of going too far, doing or having too much, and that of having or doing too little. Virtue, he says, is in the mean, the middle point, where one has just enough, is doing just the right thing. “For example, it is possible to be afraid, to be confident, to desire, to be angry, to feel pity, and, in general, to feel pleasure and pain to a greater or lesser degree than one ought, and in both cases, this is not good. But to feel them when one ought and at the things one ought, in relation to those people whom one ought, for the sake of what and as one ought—all these constitute the middle as well as what is best, which is in fact what belongs to virtue.”⁶ The virtue of liberality, or charitable giving, is a key example of this. If one gives away too much, it hurts the livelihood of the person donating, but if one gives away too little, the poor suffer and the giver can grow miserly. The key is giving away enough to help others and not grow too attached to money, but not so much that it hurts the giver’s livelihood. Since a person can attain both of these vices, they are also able to attain the middle ground, the virtue of liberality. This means that virtue is attainable. Virtue is not a mountaintop that only a few can climb. Ordinary people can attain virtue every day—if people can fall into one of two vices, then surely, they can also do the middle from time to time. That does not imply, of course, that complete virtue is easy. It requires repeated actions that are in the mean, in all spheres of one’s life.

Of course, there is no easy, one-size-fits-all answer about what is virtuous. With the example of charitable giving, there is no exact price tag on how much should be given away, largely because it is so dependent on the case. A single person would likely give more money than a large family, a wealthy person would give more than one of average or low income, all depending on what can be reasonably spared. However, all of these individuals can possess the virtue of liberality so long as they properly find the mean of action in their own lives. This is why Aristotle does not go in depth on every case, instead giving some rough guidelines on each of the eleven virtues that he lays out. The better that one understands the principle of the virtue, what characterizes that virtue, and how to identify it, the better that one can find one’s own mean. This requires careful thought and reasoning.

Although there are many virtues that Aristotle discusses, the highest and best virtue is justice. He defines justice as “complete virtue, though not unqualifiedly but in relation to another person.”⁷ It is a summation of all of the other virtues, finding the mean in the proper way in all aspects of life. But in order to find that mean, to truly live a great human life, it requires interacting with other people. For Aristotle, ethics is not really a self-help topic. It is a topic for the good of the whole state. The *Nicomachean Ethics* is

⁶ Aristotle, *Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106b18-24.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 1129b27-28.

really the first part of a treatise that continues in his *Politics*. Aristotle believes that man naturally forms communities, as he states, “From these things it is evident, then, that the city belongs among the things that exist by nature, and that man is by nature a political animal.”⁸ What happens to one person will affect the rest of the community in some way. It is not enough for one person to be good, but the whole state must be aiming at the highest goodness.

Both ethics and politics are practical arts. They are learned for the sake of being performed, and they are performed for the sake of a community, not just for an isolated individual. Most of the virtues, although particularly justice, the highest virtue, rely on a relationship with other people. Politics, or the ordering of a state, is the “most authoritative and most architectonic [art],” as all other actions within a state must serve to better the state.⁹ To order a state well, a politician must be virtuous and understand how best to promote virtue in the people. Only with this clear understanding can the state truly be aimed at what Aristotle terms “*eudaimonia*”. Although this is often translated as happiness, it goes far deeper than the transitory emotional state—it is a human flourishing, a matter of living well. *Eudaimonia* is a lofty goal, but only by aiming high will a state ever come close to reaching it.

One of the most important parts of Aristotle's philosophy is his emphasis on principles. While modern relativism would like to say that everything depends on the particular case and it is impossible to make absolute statements, Aristotle finds the truth of the matter, clearly stating the principles, unclouded with the confusion of details. In the heat of the moment, it can seem easy to compromise on principles. However, stripping down ethics and politics to their principles, and identifying their end—true, enduring human happiness, it becomes clear what is open to compromise and what is not. Anything which turns toward selfish ends and away from virtue cannot be tolerated in a truly great society.

True self-help, growing in virtue, is not just for the individual, but for the whole community. And in learning from the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*, it is vital to remember that Aristotle fully intended these works as practical lessons, with the intention of being implemented. Our practical and political mission is to restore America's heritage. In order to achieve this, we must aim for virtue, both for our own sake and for those around us. The main question is, will the actions that you take today as an individual help you grow in virtue and further that mission?

⁸ Aristotle, *Aristotle's Politics*, trans. Carnes Lord (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1253a1-2.

⁹ Aristotle, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a26-27.

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Mentor as Surrogate Parent: The Irreplaceable Role of Mothers and Fathers in the Moral Development of Children

By Timothy Gervais

“The home...is the workshop where human characters are built and the manner in which they are formed depends upon the relationship existing between parents and the children.” –Joseph Fielding Smith¹

The meaning of the word “mentor” has become diluted in the modern vernacular. As is noted at the beginning of this periodical, the word originated as a proper noun, the name of “the Homeric character Mentor (Μέντωρ), to whom great Odysseus entrusted care of his home and family.” Consequently, “mentor” did not appear as either a verb or common noun entry in the 1828 edition of Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*. Subsequent entries on the noun found in the 1898 *Webster’s International Dictionary* and the 1930 *Webster’s New International Dictionary* closely linked its meaning with the Homeric figure, suggesting the proper use of the word was primarily analogical.² Accordingly, these

early definitions closely linked the role of a mentor with moral instruction, as a mentor was viewed as “one who admonishes; one who warns of faults, informs of duty, or gives advice and instruction, esp. in reproof or caution.”³ Perhaps unsurprisingly, given that dictionaries “tell us a good deal about the changes in our



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¹ Joseph Fielding Smith in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Fielding Smith*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013).

² Using the noun analogically would entail an explicit metaphorical comparison to the original figure, e.g. “Jim is my *Mentor*,” rather than the generic modern “Jim is a *mentor* to me.” This analogical use makes direct reference to the surrogate parental role that Mentor ostensibly played to Telemachus the son of Odysseus. While general modern use of the word “*allusively* [connotes] one who fulfils the office which the supposed Mentor fulfilled towards Telemachus,” both a growing public ignorance of the story of Odysseus as well as the overuse of the word in a quotidian sense have largely obscured the full significance of the allusion. See “Mentor,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001).

³ In both the 1898 *Webster’s International Dictionary* and the 1930 *Webster’s New International Dictionary* the definition of “mentor” is closely associated with the definition of the word “monitor”. The cited quotation is from the 1930 definition of

systematic and official organization.”¹⁰ While these prescribed and systematized relationships result in varying degrees of positive targeted outcomes,¹¹ they frequently lack the fundamental characteristics that define a truly mentorial relationship: 1) the unsolicited or unassigned interest of the mentor in the mentee, 2) an established hierarchy with the mentor as an authority, and 3) a basis of moral instruction.¹² Vigen Guroian, a professor of Theology at the University of Virginia has noted this discrepancy:

It is noteworthy that our contemporary usage ignores, even contradicts, these defining characteristics of mentorship. The institutionalized nature of mentoring programs in business and education disqualifies them as true mentorship. The relationships they establish are forced, rather than freely formed. In mentor programs for youth, the egalitarian bias of our democratic culture cuts against the characteristic of mentor as authority. Rather, the mentor is supposed to be a friend or buddy to the youth.¹³

Guorian further notes that the removal of moral instruction from these relationships “has a cost,” as “true mentorship is vital to culture and the growth and flourishing...of our children.”¹⁴ “We do our children no favor by raising them in a milieu bereft of real *paideia* (or, development of the intellectual and moral virtue) and genuine mentorial relationships,” as only mentorial relationships with a moral underpinning defy “the one-dimensional secularist view of reality,” that frequently prevents adolescents from finding real meaning in life.¹⁵

The assertion that modern youth are largely deprived of true mentorial relationships founded on moral instruction is borne out in a variety of research. Due to the increasingly secular nature of the public sphere, a typical adolescent spends roughly 11 hours of each weekday participating in some form of secular education or entertainment, but on average receives only 10 minutes of moral instruction during the same

¹⁰ Helen Colley, “A Rough Guide to the History of Mentoring from a Marxist feminist perspective,” *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 28:3 (2002), 247.

¹¹ Lillian Eby, Tammy D. Allen, Sarah C. Evans, Thomas Ng, David L. DuBois, “Does Mentoring Matter? A Multidisciplinary Meta-Analysis Comparing Mentored and Non-Mentored Individuals,” *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 72:2 (2008), 254-267.

¹² Guroian, “Literature and the Real Meaning of Mentorship,” *Friendship*, (2008), 76.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Guroian, “Literature and the Real Meaning of Mentorship,” *Friendship*, (2008), 77.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

span.¹⁶ This troubling reality is directly correlated to the “modern social conditions under which work and education are organized.”¹⁷ In essence, the structure of compulsory secular public education facilitates a disproportionate amount of peer-to-peer interaction in an unprincipled setting, while correspondingly limiting the amount of time available for healthy one on one relationships with moral, disciplined, and stable adults.¹⁸ This claim is supported by the fact that, including school, modern youth spend on average 9-10 hours of each weekday primarily in the company of peers,¹⁹ as opposed to receiving roughly an hour of daily direct attention from an adult, including parents.²⁰ While some studies have linked positive peer-to-peer interaction with a variety of psychological benefits,²¹ further research reveals that “adolescent delinquency and substance use almost always occurs in the company of peers.”²² Additionally, increased peer-to-peer interaction has been shown to decrease adolescent receptiveness to parental or mentorial advice.²³ These observations describe a uniquely modern development, the rise of a social order which has been termed “youth culture,” and is characterized by preferential orientation of youth to the values, advice, and behavioral patterns of their peers over and against parental guidance.²⁴ Effectively, in the words of John Taylor Gatto, “Government schooling... has kill[ed] the family by monopolizing the best times of childhood and teaching disrespect for home and parents.”²⁵ The moral decline of western culture in many ways can be traced to this evaporation of parental and mentorial influence, as compulsory, specialized, and amoral education consumes an increasing amount of our children’s time from an increasingly early age.²⁶ The “laws and cultural practices [that have] isolated teens from [parents,]” and largely removed opportunities for youth to receive moral instruction are a significant factor in the reality that “American teens have long been in chaos, suffering high rates of depression, suicide, crime, substance abuse, pregnancy and other serious

¹⁶ Office of Adolescent Health, “A day in the life,” (2016), <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/facts-and-stats/day-in-the-life/index.html>.

¹⁷ Raymond Montemayor, “The Relationship between Parent-Adolescent Conflict and the Amount of Time Adolescents Spend Alone and with Parents and Peers,” *Child Development*, (1982), 1512.

¹⁸ Robert Epstein, *Teen 2.0: Saving our Children and Families from the Torment of Adolescence*, (Fresno: Quill Driver Books, 2010), 400.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Average hours per day spent in selected activities by age,” (2016), <https://www.bls.gov/charts/american-time-use/activity-by-age.htm>.

²¹ Carrie L. Masten, Eva H. Telzer, Andrew J. Fuligini, Matthew D. Lieberman, and Naomi I. Eisenberger, “Time spent with friends in adolescence relates to less neural sensitivity to later peer rejection,” *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 7:1 (2012), 106-114.

²² D. Albert and L. Steinberg, “Peer influences on adolescent risk behavior,” in *Inhibitory control and drug abuse prevention: From research to translation*, ed. M.T. Bardo, D.H. Fishbein, and R. Milich, (New York: Springer, 2011), 211–226.

²³ C.V. Brittain, “Adolescent choices and parent-peer cross pressures,” *American Sociological Review*, 28 (2963), 385-391.

²⁴ Epstein, *Teen 2.0*,

²⁵ John Taylor Gatto, “I quit, I think,” *The Wall Street Journal*, (July 25th, 1991).

²⁶ Epstein, *Teen 2.0*, 37-39.

problems.”²⁷

Institutionalized youth mentor programs, especially those that target at risk adolescents, are thus primarily designed to ameliorate a lack of positive parental influence in the lives of mentees.²⁸ These programmatic relationships intentionally mimic, and are largely successful inasmuch as they imitate, a healthy parent-child relationship.²⁹ In this sense, although often lacking the qualities of true mentorship, these programs are aptly named for Mentor, who is traditionally understood to have functioned as a surrogate parent to Telemachus while Odysseus was away at war.³⁰ Unfortunately, however, in both the case of the mythic Mentor and modern youth mentoring programs, the effort to mitigate the negative effects of poor familial support or absentee parents through a mentor (surrogate parent,) is relatively ineffective.

While the mythic Mentor is conventionally believed to have “displayed, towards...Telemachus, the admirable qualities of counsellor, teacher, nurturer, protector, advisor and role model,” even a casual reading of the text of *The Odyssey* reveals that Mentor “largely *failed* in his duties of keeping the King’s household intact.”³¹ Although Odysseus appointed Mentor to manage household affairs, and presumably provide Telemachus with parental-like support in his absence, upon his return, Odysseus found his household overrun by usurping suitors in the process of squandering his fortune. The difficulty that Telemachus experienced in the absence of his father is highlighted in the words of Nestor’s son Peisistratus,

A son has always trouble at home when his father has gone away leaving him without supporters; and this is how Telemachus is now placed, for his father is absent, and there is no one among his own people to stand by him.³²

While some sort of positive relationship between Telemachus and Mentor is certainly intimated by the alacrity with which Telemachus accepts the advice of the goddess Athena when she appears in the likeness of Mentor, the modern image of Mentor as a wise and caring parental figure does not appear to have been

²⁷ Epstein, *Teen 2.0*, 3.

²⁸ Timothy A. Cavell, David L. DuBois, Michael J. Karcher, Thomas E. Keller, and Jean E. Rhodes, “Policy Brief: Strengthening Mentoring Opportunities for At-Risk Youth,” (2009), https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1079&context=socwork_fac.

²⁹ Stamatia Dova, “‘Kind Like a Father’: On Mentors and Kings in the *Odyssey*,” *Harvard University Center for Hellenic Studies*, <https://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/4351>.

³⁰ Andy Roberts, “Homer’s Mentor: Duties Fulfilled or Misconstrued?,” *History of Education Journal*, (1999), 81.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Samuel Butler, <http://classics.mit.edu/Homer/odyssey.html>.

primarily derived from the text of *The Odyssey* itself. Instead, the familiar trope of Mentor as successful surrogate parent appears to have largely derived from his depiction in the French novel *Les Aventures de Telemaque* (*The Adventures of Telemachus*), published by Francois Fenelon in 1699.³³ Fenelon's work, one of the most widely read novels of the 18th century, creatively reconstructs the relationship between Mentor and Telemachus as they journey together from Ithaca in search of news about Odysseus.³⁴ While Fenelon's novel entirely relies upon Homer's epic poem for both style and context, "any comparative reading of *The Odyssey* and *Les Aventures de Telemaque* will almost immediately give rise to substantial differences between Homer's Mentor and Fenelon's Mentor."³⁵ "[While] many examples of the wisdom, the support, the nurturing and the guidance of Fenelon's Mentor may be quoted: few such examples may be found regarding Homer's Mentor."³⁶ In the words of P.P. Clarke:

In *The Odyssey* Mentor plays a secondary role. Homer focuses upon the trials of the Father, not of the education of the son. But the figure of Mentor was there...ready to be exploited by someone who was primarily concerned with education...that someone was Fenelon.³⁷

Distinguishing then, between "the Homeric Mentor" and "the Fenelonian Mentor," allows a reader of *The Odyssey* to discern more readily the difficulties experienced by Telemachus in the absence of his father, rather than obscuring them with the supposed successes of Mentor as a surrogate parent.³⁸

In like fashion, the modest positive empirical effects of youth mentoring programs in the modern day in many ways masks the troubling difficulties experienced by youth who grow up without sufficient positive parental involvement or example.³⁹ Negative outcomes associated with lack of positive parental involvement include, but are not limited to, detrimental effects on "cognitive capacity, schooling, physical

³³ Andy Roberts, "Homer's Mentor: Duties Fulfilled or Misconstrued?," *History of Education Journal*, (1999), 86.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ P.P. Clarke, "The Metamorphoses of Mentor: Fenelon to Balzac," in *The Romanic Review*, Vol. 75 No. 1, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 201.

³⁸ Roberts, "Homer's Mentor," 87.

³⁹ For instance, consider the success rate of the youth mentoring program "Big Brother, Big Sister." While studies have shown improved outcomes for at risk youth who participate in the program, the statistical gains are relatively modest, typically hovering around 30-45 percent improvement in any given measure (i.e. likelihood to begin using drugs or alcohol, likelihood of dropping out of school, etc.). <http://www.bbbs.org/research/>. While these gains are certainly positive and should not be downplayed, the fact remains that a stable and positive home life, with the involvement of both a mother and a father, is magnitudes more effective at preventing the same negative outcomes.

health, mental and emotional health, social conduct and behavior, peer relations, criminal offending, cigarette smoking, substance use, early departure from home, early-onset sexual behavior, and teenage pregnancy.”⁴⁰ Unfortunately, while these difficulties can be alleviated in some cases by the intervention of an external mentor, home-life conditions and parental behavior remain the most significant determinants of youth outcomes regardless of intervention.⁴¹ For instance, “it was reported that 70 percent of the 2.5 million children whose parents are incarcerated also end up in prison,” despite the fact that many of these children are the explicit targets of at risk youth mentoring programs.⁴² Research has shown that of all types of mentoring, programs designed to mentor youth have the least measurable positive effect, perhaps because they inherently lack the ability to improve the quality of parental involvement in a child’s life.⁴³ Researchers have even postulated that the modest positive outcomes of youth mentoring relationships are in large measure a result of “improvements in mentees’ relationships with their parents,” rather than a result of the intervention of the mentor themselves.⁴⁴

The seeming incapacity of external individuals to adequately replace parents in the positive moral development of children stems in large measure from the fact that parents function as what might be termed “primary” or “principle” mentors. Parents teach children the absolute fundamentals of humanity, as it is from a parent a child learns through imitation how to eat, sleep, move, recognize human emotion, communicate in language, and understand the dynamics of human interaction. Concurrent with these developments,

[Parents] make rules, build traditions, and develop styles of communication and ways of expressing and receiving affection. These patterns are often carried by children outside the family as moral standards. As children work, play, love, and communicate, parents evaluate their actions and words. What is good and bad or right and wrong is first understood by children from these parental judgments. Parental approval and disapproval provide a child’s first and most profound

⁴⁰ Ross Mackay, “The Impact of Family Structure and Family change on Child Outcomes: A Personal Reading of the Research Literature,” *Social Policy Journal of New Zealand*, 24 (2005), 111-133.

⁴¹ Lauren K. O’Connell, Matthew M. Davis, and Nerissa S. Bauer, “Assessing Parenting Behaviors to Improve Child Outcomes,” *Pediatrics*, 135:2 (2015), <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/135/2/e286>.

⁴² James Caplin and Michael Jonston, “Breaking the Cycle,” *Money*, 13 (2006), 149.

⁴³ Lillian Eby, Tammy D. Allen, Sarah C. Evans, Thomas Ng, David L. DuBois, “Does Mentoring Matter? A Multidisciplinary Meta-Analysis Comparing Mentored and Non-Mentored Individuals,” *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 72:2 (2008), 254-267. See also David L. DuBois, Bruce E. Holloway, Jeffrey C. Valentine, and Harris Cooper, “Effectiveness of Mentoring Programs for Youth: A Meta-Analytic Review,” *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30:2 (2002), 157-197.

⁴⁴ “Family Engagement,” *National Mentoring Resource Center*, <https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/index.php/what-works-in-mentoring/reviews-of-mentoring-practices.html?id=191>.

lessons about the moral standards of community and society.⁴⁵

In essence, by the time a child is sufficiently developed to interact with an external mentor they have already been morally shaped by their parents in profound ways. These instilled moral proclivities cannot be reversed by intermittent interaction with a surrogate parental figure. It should come as no surprise then, that,

...the people in church, school, or other institutions, though they may be helpful, are limited in their ability to influence a child's development. Specifically, in the absence of strong parental guidance, organizations are notably ineffective in one important area: developing morality. Any thoughtful observer can see that during the past several years, while parents have increasingly turned to other people and organizations for moral training of their children, increased numbers of children are less moral.⁴⁶

As families break down and parents shirk their duties as moral stewards of their children, the societal tendency to institute programs that stand in lieu of parental support increasingly render parents “a [partner] with society in child-rearing rather than the primary responsible [party] for the upbringing of children.”⁴⁷ The moral and societal dangers of shifting primary responsibility for the upbringing of children to programs outside the home can be seen in the chilling utopian vision of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, or in the equally frightening birth-to-adulthood boarding schools of Charles Swift's contemporary novel, *The Newman Resident*. In both novels, the removal of parental examples in the lives of children is detrimental to the moral development of the children, parents, and society as a whole. As noted previously, social programs outside of the home are emphatically less effective at inculcating morality in children and thus often leave youth susceptible to a wide variety of social ills. As such, while external programs certainly alleviate many of the negative effects experienced by modern youth, they often do not adequately address the true cause of the issue: a fundamental failure of primary mentors. Society should then make every effort to remediate the relationships existing in our families as “few propositions have more empirical support in

⁴⁵ A. Lynn Scoresby, “Bringing up Moral Children,” in *The Traditional Family in Peril: A Collection of Articles on International Family Issues*, (United Families International, South Jordan, 1995), 67.

⁴⁶ A. Lynn Scoresby, “Bringing up Moral Children,” in *The Traditional Family in Peril: A Collection of Articles on International Family Issues*, (South Jordan: United Families International, 1995), 64.

⁴⁷ Kendra Bartlett, “Parental Rights and Responsibilities,” in *The Traditional Family in Peril: A Collection of Articles on International Family Issues*, (South Jordan: United Families International, 1995), 117.

the social sciences than this one: families headed by married, biological parents are best for children.”⁴⁸ This observation should not be taken in any way as a renunciation of the efforts of any individual to support the moral development of children. Indeed, religious organizations, teachers, adoptive and foster parents, and single parents can and should be tremendous forces for good in the lives of our youth. However, in every effort to mentor a child, mentors should remember that moral instruction ought to be at the heart of every mentoring relationship. Additionally, perhaps no moral principle is more important for the success of societies and individuals than this: that the relationship that exists between a parent and child is sacred, and should be treated with reverence, esteem, and solemn obligation.

“There is...too much worldliness, selfishness, indifference and lack of reverence in the family, or these never would exist so abundantly on the outside. Then, the home is what needs reforming... Let love, and peace...kindness, charity, sacrifice for others, abound in your families.” –Joseph F. Smith⁴⁹

⁴⁸ David Popenoe, “The Scholarly Consensus on Marriage,”

⁴⁹ Joseph F. Smith in *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, 2013).

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Virtuous Melodies: The Importance of Music Upon the Human Soul in the *Republic* by Plato

By Michael Bacon

This exemplary thesis was submitted and successfully defended before a panel of teachers and administrators on February 5th, 2018 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a John Adams Academy diploma.

Introduction

Have you ever wondered just how drastically the music that is casually played over the radio, or through a pair of headphones, or even the song repeated in your imagination affects your personality and morality? Plato, within his dialect *The Republic*, discusses the aspects of the functionally perfect city, filled with guardians who are balanced in body, mind and soul. The guardian, however, is only taught balance in the soul through the aspect of poetry, and to an even greater extent, the music of the city. Socrates continues to debate with Glaucon upon the significance and value of music within this perfectly functioning city. Socrates discusses, firstly, about the poetry in music and its impact upon the usefulness of the guardians. He then transitions to harmony and melody, which produce the feelings of both courage and peacefulness within the guardian. His final argument revolves around rhythm, about how it should develop grace and order within the guardian's soul. Many people agree with Socrates' three main points that are the most important in music development, but there is a clear diversion between those who believe that music plays an important role in the development of one's soul, and those who see it as just another medium of entertainment.

Music plays a significant role in the development of the human soul for three reasons: the lyrics and speech in music drive unity and cognitive ability, the melodies and harmonies in music teach the soul to understand the significance of consonance and dissonance, and the rhythms in music develop grace and order within the soul.



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The Poetry in Music

Plato, within his account of Socrates' division of musical attributes, addresses the idea of speech, lyrics and poetry in music. He states that speech in music should be focused on the betterment of the soul rather than simply sorrowful expression¹. Music oftentimes captures its audience through the act of storytelling: poetry that is captivating through each verse. Lyrics, through repetition, often introduce ideas that are never forgotten. In children just beginning to understand the difference between shapes and colors, the alphabet is crucial in the development of speech and communication. It is not drill and continuous simple repetition of the words that enhance the brain's ability to commit the ideas to memory, but the catalyst for memorization comes from the "Alphabet Song" that is taught with it. The ABC's become a child's best friend as the teacher announces it's time to sing the alphabet, not simply recite it. In a doctoral study on the connections between music and knowledge on sixty-two kindergarteners, "moderate to strong correlations were found between tonal, rhythmic, and overall music aptitude and early literacy skills including alphabet knowledge"². The ability to understand literature after combining music and speech allows the brain to understand intellectual topics at a greater level, and further induces the ability to remember topics through the words that are sung within the lyrics.

Alongside the development of merely the educational portion of the brain, the flowing poetry in religious spirituals evokes feelings of grace and hope, removing harmful ideas from a suffering soul. Within Uncle Tom's Cabin, an American classic written by Harriet Beecher Stowe, Tom's rich southern voice attracts the spirit of good health to all who hear his melody to the heavens. As Tom lays beaten and battered within Legree's Plantation, his singing brings light to the dark slave quarters. His tenor melody was cut short by Legree's cursing and blaspheming, but "Tom's whole soul overflowed with compassion and sympathy"³. Despite the evils and demons that surround the God-fearing slave, the worship lifts high Tom's soul and protects him from the pain and corruption that he faces. Hope is restored when the soul is purified through the impact of music on the heart. After being whipped for disobeying his master, it is not grief that overcomes Tom, but compassion; not sorrow, but sympathy. Earlier in the same chapter, the lyrics of a spiritual hymn instill peace as Tom stares into the night sky, viewing the "angelic hosts"⁴ that dot the horizon. "The earth shall be dissolved like snow, the sun shall cease to shine; but God, who called me here

¹ Plato, *The Republic*, Allen Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 398 d.

² Rubinson, Laura E. "A Correlational Study of the Relationships between Music Aptitude and Phonemic Awareness of Kindergarten Children." *Capella University*, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2010, pp. 16-54.

³ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2011), pp. 332-333.

⁴ *Ibid.* P 331.

below, shall forever be mine.”⁵ These lyrics bring about the peace that is found within the best of days to a man suffering his worst. They are not simply words taken at face value, but each phrase penetrates the heart, surrounding the soul in a warm embrace, and gifting grace back into the life of pain.

The soul is both intellectually improved and spiritually healed through poetry, but an additional benefit of music builds on unity, patriotism and valor. Lyrics rally men together to fight against the evils of the world, moving each soul individually and preparing to compete against the foe. Americans unify under these lyrics as the feeling of patriotism overwhelms the soul. “Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just, and this be our motto - “In God is our trust,” and the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave”⁶. These lyrics, written by the American poet Francis Scott Key, depict the strife and struggle that America had endured in order to establish itself as a free country. “The Star Spangled Banner” is not simply a historical record, but a rallying call in the hearts of all Americans to remember their roots and find courage in the “...land of the free and the home of the brave”. The poetry behind the melody composes its own symphony. It is the symphony of voices that sing loud and bright at sporting events, and it is the symphony of hearts beating in reverence to the flag that stands for freedom. This unity is strongly bound within the hearts of Americans, even as the impossible has become possible, as life seems to be falling from harmony and peace. After the attack on The World Trade Center in September of 2001, it was Lee Greenwood who sang his rendition of “I’m Proud to be an American” just days after the attack⁷. His rendition reminded the crowd of the patriotism that lies within the roots of America, and through his song he inspired millions of people to stand up and recoup after the devastating attack. This unity is found within the poetry of Francis Key, and the lyrics of Lee Greenwood. It is the speech behind each chord, arpeggio, scale and note that truly drives the soul to fight for those around who believe in a better tomorrow.

Harmony of the Spheres

Equally important are the harmonies that are behind every lyric and verse within a song. Socrates expresses that harmony, and its differing modes, are the second most influential part to the human soul. Harmony is the most dramatic portion of a musical score, dealing with the emotional effects of certain

⁵ Ibid.

⁶“The Lyrics of the Star Spangled Banner.” NMAH | The Lyrics. Accessed November 15, 2017. <https://amhistory.si.edu/starspangledbanner/the-lyrics.aspx>.

⁷“Lee Greenwood Sings ‘God Bless The USA’ Days After 9/11.” MRCTV. Accessed November 28, 2017. <https://www.mrcvtv.org/blog/lee-greenwood-sings-god-bless-usa-days-after-911>.

chords (often referred to as modes). These modes are crucial in music, and Socrates' describes the harmonies that are most beneficial to the human soul: "A violent one and a voluntary one."⁸ The first harmony, although called "violent", is better described as inspiring, and provokes a man to stand up and put all his energy into his deeds. John Phillip Sousa's *Stars and Stripes Forever*⁹ is an American classic and favorite for its patriotic inspiration and its ability to instill courage constantly in every situation. Despite its lack of lyrics that might drive emotions, the sheer push and shove within every movement is encouraging and provides a strong patriotic will within the hearts of its audience. The second harmony is a voluntary set of sounds, a collection that is peaceful and introduces tranquility into an environment. *Clair de Lune*, a classical piano piece composed by Claude DeBussy, rises and flows in between its various movements, always resolving into a mindset that is calming: a dreamlike state. These changes in moods direct the soul back to a mindset that seeks higher understanding, and desires both the rise and fall of certain chords that reflect their being.

Alongside the emotional appeal that is credited to harmony, it also has an important connection to mathematics and the world as we know it, developing balance to the soul. Harmony and Discord in music are, in the most basic terms, mathematical ratios. Pythagoras, in his study of the *musica* that connects the planets and the stars in their natures (Music of the Spheres)¹⁰ concluded that music is a mathematical concept that can be distinguished through the usage of ratios. Each ratio has different properties, either consisting of a clash of sounds or a melodic pair of notes. However, each dissonance or consonance produces in itself a balance. The nature of music remains as a balance between the stressful and light progressions, complementing each other depending upon their intended audience. Music is a balancing act. In order to create a great work of art, it must balance the ratios that mathematics provides in order to create harmony. Harmony in music instills the values of these mathematical principles in a vigorously rising major chord, or falling into despair through a minor arpeggio. These harmonies inspire the soul to both fall into balance with the world through the ratios that are ever present.

Harmony is oftentimes only seen in consonance, the pleasing sounds that build a melodic and joyful musical arrangement. The Merriam-Webster dictionary even defines harmony as a "pleasing

⁸ Plato, *The Republic*, Allen Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968). 399 c.

⁹ "Unit Home." United States Marine Band. Accessed November 13, 2017. <http://www.marineband.marines.mil/Audio-Resources/The-Complete-Marches-of-John-Philip-Sousa/The-Stars-and-Stripes-Forever-March/>.

¹⁰ "Music of the Spheres." Music of the Spheres, Harmony of the Spheres - Celestial Spheres - Crystalinks. Accessed October 2017. <http://www.crystalinks.com/musicspheres.html>.

arrangement of parts”¹¹. Although this aspect of harmony is vital in creating magnificent pieces for the soul, dissonance plays a major part as well. Just as light needs dark to shine, so does music need the dark and unresolved chords in order to allow the resolution to shine greater than it can alone. “Dissonant intervals are those that cause tension and desire to be resolved to consonant intervals.”¹² Harmony is a lesson in persistence and perseverance despite the mounds that come in between the soul and its desires. Many times the soul is tried and tested to the point where life is dissonant, full of stress and tension that seems impossible to overcome. Harmony provides the soul with the philosophical answer of resolution. Every rubberband that is stretched always desires to return back to its normal size, just as the 7th in a major chord always desires to return back to the key or its octave. Harmony, whether directed in chord progressions, or in the desire to resolve its own discord, balances the workings of the soul.

Rhythm and Grace

Lastly, only rhythm remains, laying the foundation that all music is built upon. Both speech and harmony bring the feelings of beauty and unity to the ears of those who will listen, but it is the back-beat behind it all, the heart-beat behind music, that develops grace and order inside the soul. Socrates discusses the value of the beat that imposes “an orderly and courageous life”¹³ in the souls of man, and how that rhythm affects the way men associate grace within their own lives. The effect of a single drum upon the military within the Revolutionary War built order and courage in the regiments of the Colonists and in the British battalions. As different orders would be called out, those commands would be followed by every soldier through the beat that the drummers would perform.¹⁴ Over a large army of thousands of men, these drum beats were the commands, the calls to action and the calls to retreat, the call to flee and the call to fight. They followed each rhythm because it inspired each man to remain courageous, to continue fighting and to stand until victory was won. In 1944, Willie Duckworth, an African American soldier in the U.S. Army, lifted a cadence to spur on the weary soldiers running beside him.¹⁵ This chant, now known as the “Duckworth Chant”, was built upon a constant, steady and motivating rhythm that inspired the tired men to continue jogging. Willie’s rhythm was a stepping stone in the modern aspect of the military cadence due to

¹¹“Harmony.” Merriam-Webster. Accessed October 2017 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/harmony>.

¹²Oy/ML, Medusaworks. “Consonance and Dissonance.” Music Theory: Consonance and dissonance. Accessed November 2017. <http://www2.siba.fi/muste1/index.php?id=65&la=en>.

¹³ Plato, *The Republic*, Allen Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968). 399 e.

¹⁴ Warnersregiment.org. (2018). *Battlefield Signals*. [online] Available at: <http://www.warnersregiment.org/Battlefield%20Signals.html> [Accessed Oct. 2017].

¹⁵Kelley, Frannie. “Sound Off: Where The Military’s Rhythm Came From.” NPR. June 16, 2014. Accessed October 2017. <http://www.npr.org/2014/06/16/322589902/sound-off-where-the-militarys-rhythm-came-from>.

the fact that it gave each individual the perseverance to jog farther than each believed they could. They were running in step with each other, keeping order within their ranks, and building that bond that is only found in a well-oiled machine.

Memory plays an important role in the significance of rhythm, alongside the development of order and unity. Certain rhythms produce those events that leave a lasting imprint on a specific memory; the racing, pounding beat of a teenager at a rock concert, the *largo* tempo produced during the first dance between a husband and wife, the last pulse felt when a loved one passes away. Rhythms create lasting memories that leave lasting effects on any individual, even on those who seem to have lost all knowledge through old age, dementia, or Alzheimer's Disease. The movie "Alive Inside,"¹⁶ a documentary on the positive impact that music has on the memories and actions of patients with dementia or Alzheimer's, focuses on the impact that music has on the impaired memories of dementia patients. In one portion of the documentary, Henry, a dementia patient and resident of a nursing home for ten years, is exposed to the music of his generation¹⁷. Despite his severe lack of mobility and his lack of speech, Henry began to sing and dance at the mere exposure of the music of his childhood. The similar rhythms and beats that Henry had lived on, revived his soul from the restraints built by the physical disabilities he had developed. His abilities to answer questions, his mobility, and his character all improved after only experiencing the same rhythms that created those feelings and memories in the first place. Each individual beat places lasting, almost eternal, effects on the brain that cannot be taken away.

Not only do rhythms produce a lasting sense of familiarity and a bond between courage and order, but rhythm is the almighty mentor in the art of grace. Dancing always falls to the bend and curve of the beat, whether it is swing dancing to the 1940s big band music of Tommy Dorsey, or the twists and turns that the Spanish guitar of Sabicas evokes on the mind of the dancers. However the tempo, rhythm invokes a kind of grace within the body, a sense of control over where and when each portion of the dance will take place. Ballet, perhaps the most difficult of any form of dance, relies heavily upon grace to flow alongside the elegant music behind each step. Tchaikovsky, a classical Russian composer of orchestral music, wrote many pieces that, by themselves, flow from movement to movement, almost floating in every measure. In his composition *Swan Lake*, ballet dancers must follow the flow of the music to depict the story it portrays. Each rise and fall creates a bounce in the steps of the ballet, but each must remain fluent and graceful.

¹⁶"Alive Inside: A Story of Music and Memory." Wikipedia. January 11, 2018. Accessed November 2017.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alive_Inside:_A_Story_of_Music_and_Memory.

¹⁷Music and Memory. "Man In Nursing Home Reacts To Hearing Music From His Era." YouTube. November 18, 2011. Accessed October 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=190&v=fyZQf0p73QM.

When grace is not present, each step is heavy and steals away from the beauty that the piece expresses. Rhythm develops this kind of fluent motion within the soul as to allow each individual to bend and flow to the world around them, but do so as to see the beauty in everything.

The Distractions of Music

Although many people view the impact of music as positive on the development of the soul, there are some who believe the motives behind each song distract the listener from seeking true virtues. From the lyrics that fill a chorus during religious worship to the anger filled rhymes found in modern rap and rock, the effects of music tempt the individual away from the true value of the lyrics behind the melodies. Saint Augustine, in The Confessions, recounts that music has coiled his ear, wrapped in the sweet harmonies and lyrics that rose during worship. “The pleasures of the ear used to hold me tight in their coils and keep me subject, but you have released and delivered me”.¹⁸ The “evils” of music had removed the value from his worship, and turned each moment into a personal pleasure, instead of a praise lifted to God. His value in music is similar to others around him, but it had taken him from the path of righteousness, and placed him upon the path that he had desired to leave behind. It had restrained his soul from reaching virtue. Those who fall into the chasm that the lyrics behind music provides seek only the pleasures that the flesh has to offer, not for the greater good. Only those who listen in moderation can stay on the path that seeks virtue.

Following closely on Augustine’s argument against the tempestuous nature of music, the sweet melodies of instruments alone can draw men away from their moral course. God gifts his creation with the ability to play music, to take strings or wind or sticks and be able to create music. As time progresses, the talent grows and blossoms into an extraordinary part of the individual's life. This talent, however, then consumes the mind, and the virtuoso begins to side step onto his own path. Great musicians, like Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson, flourished in the musical industry and became idols that their respective genres look up too. Their price for fame, however, cost them their lives. They fell into drugs, and in their rush to fame, they fell into worshipping the lifestyle that their instrument and their talent had placed in front of them. Making music created their fame, but that same music led to their departure from this world because they worshipped the lifestyle that had been given to them.

Music, like many other objects, can be detrimental to the safety and morality of the listener and to the performer when not used for its intended purpose. The value of music comes not from its temptation,

¹⁸ Augustine. *The Confessions*. Translated by Philip Burton. Compiled by Robin Lane Fox. London: Everyman Publishers, 2001. P 244.

but from its creation. In Psalm 150, King David describes, in song, that music is meant to praise God and all that He has created. "Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; ...with lute and harp. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance!...with stringed instruments and flutes...with loud cymbals" (Psalm 150: 3-5). Music is designed to be filled with passion and meaning. It is meant to catch the ear and draw you into its embrace. Music is not a trap that ensnares its prey, but it reaches out to new places to expand and grow. Music is meant to be a shout of the soul to the Creator, a picture painted by the child for the Father that he might value it in his heart forever. Music is not a temptation, when it is used for the purpose it was designed to achieve. It is a connection between the soul and to the higher power that rules over our hearts.

Music is Only For Entertainment

There are also those who believe that music has no effect on the minds and souls of children, but is simply another medium of entertainment. Many popular rap artists release songs that are angry, and talk about how easy it is to seduce women. Some even go as far as to bring profanity, sexuality, crime, and other unlawful actions into their music as a key ingredient to their success. In a study on the effects of this violent rap, it was found that the actions that are utilized within the music are not directly shown within the teenagers who listen to this kind of music¹⁹. This music evokes emotion, but it is not something that is decisively a positive, nor a negative influence on behavior. Different kinds of people listen to different kinds of music depending upon the mood that they feel. The rap that flows within the mainstream media is nothing more than people rhyming for the sake of entertainment, and desire to turn music into profit.

In the general spectrum of music, some believe that all music is nothing but a form of enjoyment for the subject to experience. The music that flows throughout the internet, on records and compact disks, on cassette tapes and digital players, is merely there, an item that can be used to build on other items. In an intense movie scene, the orchestra might rise and fall according to the screenplay, only further building the tension in the theater. This music does not bring about virtue, nor does it persuade people to understand what is good in life. It is simply there, accompanying its counterpart through booming speakers that shake the floor. It has no value within the soul, no drive to continually seek out the virtuous life. *He's a Pirate*²⁰,

¹⁹ Copley, Jennifer. "Violent Rap Lyrics Do Not Affect Listener Behavior or Attitudes." *Rap and Hip-Hop*, edited by Tamara Thompson, Greenhaven Press, 2013. Current Controversies. *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*, link.galegroup.com/apps/doc/EJ3010870221/OVIC?u=lom_accessmich&xid=ae2e11b8. Accessed 27 Nov. 2017. Originally published as "Rap Music's Psychological Effects: Research into Mood, Behavior, Crime, Violence and Gender Relations," *jennifercopley.suite101.com*, 8 May 2008.

²⁰ "He's a Pirate - Pirates of the Caribbean (Orchestral)." MuseScore.com. Accessed January 2018. <https://musescore.com/user/109064/scores/3042286>.

written by Klaus Badelt, is the iconic theme of the Pirates of the Caribbean franchise. It is connected with action, adventure, and the values that make a pirate daring on the Seven Seas. Its intent seeks only to follow Captain Jack Sparrow on his adventures, creating an atmosphere of danger wherever he travels. It does not inspire virtue, nor does it seek positive outcomes. Likewise, dance music, particularly in the electronic genre and subgenres that follow, serves only as a catalyst to movement. Its effect lies solely on the ability to blast music at extremely dangerous levels, all for people to lose themselves in dancing and partying. Creators, like Joel Zimmerman (who go by the alias Deadmau5²¹), a leading artist in the electronic music genre, build careers from this form of entertainment, and build their whole life around music that produces enjoyment for the moment, and not for something that will stand the tests of time.

Entertainment produces a kind of pleasure that is only found when a subject is enjoyed for its value. If music were simply made for its entertainment value, and nothing more than to introduce pleasure, it would still be impacting the parts of the soul that introduce happiness. Something is entertaining when it touches a part of the soul that relates to the music at hand. When a song that talks about dancing late into the night, clasping a loved one tightly as a whirl of passionate spins, it touches the souls desire to be loved, to be more than just a friend. When a song brings tears to the eyes of a crowd, or creates a shout of excitement and a chorus of thousands all singing the same verse, or even evokes the peace of the moment to be ever greater, the soul has been tapped into. Every action, and every emotion comes from the inner workings of the soul. Every experience relates to different songs, every feeling can be expressed in words and in harmonies, and everyone finds themselves dancing to one song or another because they feel like it was written just for them. Music is written by people expressing how they feel in a certain moment, in order to touch other people who feel the same way. The orchestra soundtrack that follows an intense movie scene relates to the excitement of the moment, and further brings the movie to life within everyone's imagination. Rap reaches to those who are often left less fortunate, and touches their desire to be heard. The electronic dance music that has swarmed clubs connects everyone's desire to let go of the stress that life imposes, and to just enjoy the moment. Music is created for entertainment, but its audience is focused not at the mind or towards the body, but to penetrate the inner workings of the soul, and evoke its meaning in the hearts of every individual.

²¹ "Deadmau5." Wikipedia. January 15, 2018. Accessed January 2018. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadmau5>.

Conclusion

Music, subsequently, is vital in the development of the human soul. The speech in music creates the sensation of unity, and produces a higher level of understanding. Through the harmony and discord in music, the soul understands the importance of conflict, and how to resolve a situation for the greater good. Finally, through the constant rhythmic beat in music, the soul develops a graceful disposition, able to stand firm and flow despite the situation. From the simple music that comes from a single voice, to the collective majesty of an orchestra, and the intricate sounds that build enticing melodies, music creates life in all who take part in it. Music is within every human soul, and flows throughout nature. It drives man to passion, to love, to victory and relates to his sorrow. If music were nothing more than a simple pleasure in the grand scheme of life, the developments of the human soul would be missing a vital key to finding happiness in every moment of the hardest times of life.

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Call for Submissions

The editors of *Mentor* would like to graciously invite all John Adams Academy faculty to contribute submissions to this journal. As educators, we have secretly appreciated how your actions and words contribute to our academic community; as writers we have jealously admired how you see the good in things beyond our view. Whether your main vantage point is a Kindergarten classroom, an administrative office, or places beyond or between, you have valuable perspectives on the ways our Core Values intersect with the curricula of our Academy.

On a rotating basis, *Mentor* will focus on a particular Core Value. The substance of this third volume has been our 3rd Core value, *Emphasis on Mentors and Classics*. In the upcoming Fall issue, the theme will rotate to our 4th Core Value, *Scholar Empowered Learning*

All articles within the journal aim simply to connect the thematic Core Value with a classic written text, song, or artifact that is presently studied at school. Whether you have found an emphasis on mentors and classics in Homer's *Odyssey* or *D'Aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*, we invite you to submit an essay for consideration. Do not hide your light—you are wise and observant and we would love to hear from you!

Article prompt:

Having selected a written text, artefact, or artistic work from the Academy's curricula, discuss and persuade in an essay of 1000 to 2,500 words how John Adams Academy's 4th Core Value *Scholar Empowered Learning* is evident in (your chosen) musical score, artefact, or written text. Cite and credit all sources according to Chicago style formatting, including a Bibliography. If citing and sourcing is not your strength, assistance is available.

Review/Publication Process:

1. Submission Deadline: **Friday, November 3rd**
2. Saturday, November 4th–Friday, November 10th: Submissions will be read and reviewed by active John Adams School Board, who will select essays for publication.
3. Saturday, November 11th–Friday, November 17th: Editing and proof-reading of nominated essays by *Mentor* editors Greg Blankenbeler and Michael Boal.
4. Distribution: Monday, December 4th through Friday, December 8th.

Nota Bene: during the week of 11/11 through 11/17 submitted essays may be returned to their authors for suggested revision. As editors, we will make every effort to maintain the integrity of all original essays in their entirety, but given the need for timely printing and distribution, we must reserve the right to make all final revisions.



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